

SET IT OFF

by Kate Lanier

based on an original screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

to a BLACK SCREEN, OVER which we HEAR, o.s., a familiar "DING," then a VOICE: "... next in line, please..." then "SHHTT, SHHHT" -- the SOUND of crisp bills being counted...

BLACK TO:

1 INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - OAKLAND, CA - DAY (THE PRESENT) 1

on FRANKIE, 20, attractive black woman tempered with a calculating urban edge. There's something fierce about her, despite the suit and pumps.

ANGLE - THE LINE

Three customers in; is DARNELL, 27, a rude-boy-type of a gangsta. His eyes shift, nervous. The "DING" again, SOUNDING as a lit arrow indicates a free teller.

ECU on the lit-up arrow, beckoning.

Frankie looks up and her eyes meet Darnell's. She smiles, looks at him questioningly as she counts money for an older man.

FRANKIE (mouthing the words)
YOU DOIN' HERE?

Darnell pretends not to see. Looks away. Again, a teller signals for the next customer. The arrow lights, the DING SOUNDS. Frankie finishes up with her customer.

ECU on Darnell's eyes. Beads of sweat gathering around the brow.

ECU on arrow lighting up with a "DING."

And next in line is Darnell. He moves up to Frankie's window. Looks around.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(putting away scripts from last transaction) Darnell.
Didn't know you had an account here.

He mumbles something unintelligible.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
So how's your boy Terrell? I haven't seen him since, like, February or somethin'. That fool truly needs to work on his manners and shit --

She looks up, and down into the barrel of a revolver. A BULLET SLIDES INTO PLACE. Darnell lowers it, places it, still aimed at Frankie, on the counter.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Oh no... no, no... Darnell, don't do this.

DARNELL (whispered)
Shut the fuck up!! Just empty the fuckin' drawer.

Frankie is frozen. She stares at Darnell. Doesn't move. Behind him she can see Darnell's buddy, LORENZ, 25, by the deposit slip counter, a bulge in his jacket.

DARNELL (CONT'D)
Frankie! Give me the fuckin' drawer!!!!...

She doesn't move. Another friend. B.B., wearing inconspicuous work clothes, suddenly brandishes a semi-automatic. Steps out from the line and runs next to Darnell. He jumps up onto the counter, swinging himself onto the four-foot-high bulletproof partition. From here, he can point his weapon down at Frankie.

B.B.
Give him the MONEY!!!

Frankie is still frozen in terror.

2 INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - DAY

2

SLO MO as Darnell reaches behind him and grabs the hair of the next person in line, a middle-aged woman. Drags her in front of Frankie's face. He puts the gun to the woman's head.

3 INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - DAY

3

CLOSE - FRANKIE

as he fires the gun. Blood and pieces of shattered skull fly all over Frankie. She screams, gut-wrenching, horrified, as she tries to shake the blood off.

She reaches down to the drawer and throws the money at Darnell, screaming:

FRANKIE
Here... take it -- take it!!!

Money flies around their heads, as two security guards come charging INTO the SCENE. Lorenz screams and brandishes a semi-automatic. B.B. grabs the money and throws it to Lorenz. The whole bank falls to the floor. Darnell fires at one of the guards who goes down. Lorenz makes it to the door. Darnell follows, taking aim behind him at the remaining guard. He misses. The guard returns fire. The bullet catches Darnell in the chest.

SLO MO as he falls, shuddering, to the ground.

4 EXT. OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 4

Graduation. An outdoor auditorium. A hundred students stand up and cheer, throwing their caps in the air.

5 EXT. OAKLAND HIGH - COURTYARD - DAY 5

Families gathered; pictures are being taken. STONY, 20, smooth, honeyed skin, warm brown eyes, has her arm around her baby brother STEVIE, 18, who has just graduated. She adjusts his cap and gown as a friend takes a picture. She squeezes him hard, lifts him off his feet with a bear hug.

STONY (singing)
"He ain't heavy... he's my brother..."

Laughter; applause from their friends. She kisses him, presses his kinky hair down with tender, caring fingers.

STONY (CONT'D)
You did it, Stevie.

She leans in and whispers in his ear.

STONY (CONT'D)
You know what Mama would say now?

He looks at her. She has something hidden behind her back.

STONY (CONT'D)
It's ALL yours, baby. Take it ALL, brother!!!

She REVEALS a bottle of sparkling wine, shakes the bottle. He ducks, shouting as she pours it, foaming down over his head.

One senses that Stony is more mother than sis. This is HER Stevie, and we can see the fierce pride and protection she feels.

6 INT. PROJECTS - NIGHT 6

A full-on house party for Stevie's graduation. The room is packed, body-to-body. Stevie is being hugged and congratulated as people pass by him, dancing. Stony's arms are loaded down with bottles of 40 oz. beer. Her girlfriend and soulmate, TISEAN, 23, stands aside rocking her baby boy, JAJUAN, 18 months, dancing a whining dance without using her arms. Tisean is a young, doe-eyed girl, lanky and shy. She spots Stony and blocks her path.

TISEAN
Stony girl... come on. (softly) You been doin' everything for that boy since yo' mama died. Take a break.

STONY
I'm just...

Tisean puts Jajuan on her hip and takes Stony's hand as guests grab the remaining bottles.

TISEAN

You're dancin' now, sister.

They laugh. The beats are loud and furious. The girls move together, getting with the whole crowd.

ANGLE - STEVIE

a smile plastered on his face, looking through the crowd for his sister. He finally spots her and pushes his way through.

Their eyes meet and she can tell that something's wrong. He motions for her to follow him.

7 INT. STEVIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

Typical high-school room, posters of Michael Jordan, etc. Stony sits on the bed. Stevie paces, near tears. His agitation is surprising. The WALL POUNDS from the BASS in the adjoining room.

STONY (concerned)

Stevie... What is it?...

He smashes his fist into the music-drenched wall.

STEVIE

I ain't goin'. I ain't goin' to college.

STONY

Of course you are... You got into Willamette and --

He shoves a letter in her face, the tears rolling down his own. His shoulders shake with disappointment.

STONY (CONT'D) (scanning the letter)

"Sorry... deny the scholarship funds... so many young men and women with financial needs..."

She looks up at him.

STONY (CONT'D)

They won't give you a scholarship?!

He nods.

STONY (CONT'D)

But we TOLD them only way we could APPLY was if --

STEVIE (screaming)

I know, I KNOW!!!

She thinks.

STONY

I'll get it together.

STEVIE

All that money? In two months?

STONY

I will.

STEVIE

I'm gonna defer a year.

STONY

No, no, no, no, no. You ain't hangin' out with those hoodlums over at Acorn one more year!

STEVIE

Why you have to dis my homeys?

STONY

Yo' homeys? The fuck is that? "Stevie... lend me a C-note for dis here pair o' Nikes..." "Stevie... how 'bout you treat us to some dinner?..."

They look at each other. He nods. She's right.

STEVIE

Awright... they are some broke motherfuckers...

STONY

... up to NO good. (a beat) I'm getting you outta here.

STEVIE

Stony... you're my sister an' all... but you got to relax --

She's suddenly distracted, staring at something on his face.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

What?

STONY (peering closer)

Coleslaw... or potato salad... right there...

She spits on the edge of her shirt and moves to clean him off. He fends her off.

STEVIE

See, that's what I'm talkin' about!!

STONY

Shh!!

She goes ahead and wipes off the spot on his chin, holding him in a headlock, much to his disgust.

8

INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - EMPTY - NIGHT

8

Frankie is in the same clothes, still covered with now-dried blood. Her eyes are dead, cold. She looks shell-shocked, traumatized. DETECTIVE STRODE, white, 40's, interrogates her.

DET. STRODE

Let's take it from the top.

FRANKIE

I've told you what happened ten times.

DET. STRODE

How well did you know the perpetrator?

FRANKIE

Just knew Darnell from around the way is all. Use to hang with my brother.

He gives her a long, hard look meant to make her squirm.

DET. STRODE

Can you tell me something, Frankie? What's the procedure when you're being robbed?

FRANKIE

Look. I know I didn't follow the...

DET. STRODE (in her face)

What's the fuckin' procedure?

FRANKIE (shaken)

You pull the money clip from yo' right-hand drawer, then you signal the --

DET. STRODE (interrupting)

Ahh! So you DO know the procedure?

Frankie glares at him.

FRANKIE

Yes, like I said --

DET. STRODE

And why is it, if that procedure has been drummed in your head a million times, if you KNOW that procedure... why is it that you didn't FOLLOW the procedure???

The CAMERA turns to two bank officers watching Frankie being interrogated by the detective.

DISSOLVE TO:

9

INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - NIGHT

9

Moments later Frankie is sobbing. MRS. XELLOIS, Frankie's branch manager, has joined the police, along with the bank's president, MR. ZACHERY.

ZACHERY

I'm afraid, Ms. Sutton, we're going to have to let you go. The fact that you knew the perpetrator doesn't sit well with us.

FRANKIE

This ain't right; I didn't do anything wrong. I can't help who I know. Just last week I got a promotion and now you take my job behind this crap.

ZACHERY

What happens the next time one of your "friends" robs the bank? How do we know you're not in collusion?

FRANKIE

Because I'm here at eight-twenty sharp, every morning and I work my tail off until quitting time. Yesterday I counted two-hundred-forty thousand dollars by hand... that's how you know. I mean, this isn't right.

A sob escapes her. The true roughneck takes over.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

I nearly got blown away in yo' tired ass fuckin' bank an' now you gonna FIRE me????

ZACHERY

Calm down...

FRANKIE (in tears)

You couldn't even WAIT? You couldn't wait 'til tomorrow. After ALL of this --

She motions to her bloody clothes.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

You gotta FIRE me??

Zachery looks away. They are clearly uncomfortable. Frankie turns to go.

In a sudden burst of rage she picks up the water GLASS, half-empty, that Det. Strode was drinking from and throws it against the wall, where it SHATTERS.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

You ain't even ASKED me if I was thirsty!!!

Det. Strode watches her carefully as she grabs her bag and prepares to leave. He blocks her way for a moment, then steps aside. She leaves.

He turns to his associate in Robbery, DETECTIVE JAMISON, 30's, black.

DET. STRODE

I want everything you have on her.

Jamison nods.

10

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

10

Tisean leans against a large trash dumpster, waits for CLEO, 21, a stout girl with masculine ways, to roll a large trash receptacle out of the building. The two women lift the receptacle, emptying its contents into the dumpster. Stony follows behind them, rolling an equipment stand. She's lost in thought, far away. Cleo tweaks her on the forehead. Stony swats back at her, irritated.

CLEO

Where you at?

STONY

Tryin' to figure out how to make some MONEY!

They watch as a white van ENTERS from the alley. The side panel of the van reads: "LUTHER'S JANITORIAL SERVICE." LUTHER, 42, black, climbs out of the van; approaches with a clipboard in hand. There's something sleazy about Luther: gold tooth, evil grin.

CLEO (under her breath)

Well it ain't here with this FOOL.

LUTHER

Good evening, ladies... (snidely, to Cleo) ... and gentleman. Listen up. You forgot to empty the cans in one-oh-four...

TISEAN

One-oh-four is Cleo's...

CLEO

... and you a lying skeezer, too!

They laugh and slap high-fives.

LUTHER

... Cleo, girl, much wax residue, get the brushes up close to the walls... also these good white folks are recycling all their plastics, glasses and aluminum and you bitches put all that stuff in the dumpster. One more thang, I came by here last Friday at ten and the place was empty.

STONY

We were here...

CLEO

Yeah, down by the dumpster smoking a blunt and kicking back a forty.

STONY

YOU were. I was tryin' to make an honest buck. A
forty and blunt's all THAT girl wants...

They laugh.

LUTHER

Well, if it happens again, I'm docking pay.

TISEAN

(softly) Speaking... um... speaking of pay, Luther...

Tisean hates making waves, but she's worried.

TISEAN (CONT'D)

I... I... why did... I mean... you promised not to
tell welfare about my money. You PROMISED me.

He waves her off.

LUTHER

On this good earth there are three peoples I don't
mess with ... Superman, the IRS and niggaz with guns.
I can't pay you cash under the table no more.

TISEAN

They're calling me down to the welfare... I'm jus'
afraid they gonna cut me off... I have my baby to --

LUTHER

You don't like working for Luther's Janitorial, get a
job downtown, go work for the goddamn stock exchange.

CLEO (shaking her head)

You are one cold-hearted motherfucker, Luther. Damn.
She jus' tryin' feed her OWN.

Luther gets back in the van. Stony puts an arm around Tisean.

STONY

That's not right... you got stand up for y'self.

CLEO

Got no RESPECT.

The women start loading their buckets, buffers, mops, etc. into the
van, another night's work done.

CLEO (CONT'D)

You hear what happened to Frankie?...

STONY

Frankie... OUR Frankie?

CLEO

Darnell and them robbed her branch...

No!!

STONY

CLEO

... they blew HIM away... but those other lowdown crackhead skeezers got away wit' some Krones.

STONY

Now THAT is a fool move. Robbin' a damn bank.

Tisean walks with her head down.

CLEO

Tisean, baby. You GOT to learn to MOUTH off to a motherfucker! You know?

She puts a friendly arm around her.

TISEAN

I... I need the money too bad --

STONY

Why's it always have to be about money? Seems like we never gone get ENOUGH.

Cleo nods.

CLEO

I hear you.

STONY (almost to herself)

I just want to feel like... just once, like there's ENOUGH.

11 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OAKLAND - DAY

11

Det. Strode ENTERS with Jamison and an armful of papers. He's greeted by his old friend and associate DETECTIVE DONNER, white, 40's.

DONNER

Hey, Bill! Ya bald old fucker...

He punches his belly.

DONNER (CONT'D)

Fuckin' rubber tire...

DET. STRODE

Look who's talkin'... used ta have a goddamn washboard there... back in the military...

DONNER

And YOU used ta have hair...

Jamison shakes his head.

JAMISON
White folks is strange... the way y'all are friends.

DISSOLVE TO:

12 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OAKLAND - DAY

12

Much later. Other detectives have joined them around a computer: split-up screen shows cropped STILLS of Lorenz; from robberies, prior mug shots and surveillance photos.

DET. STRODE
Two-elevens in four cities. This kid is wanted in Nevada and Arizona... shit... he's a fuckin' pro for what... twenty-one?

DONNER
They're getting younger...

Det. Strode turns to Jamison.

DET. STRODE
Let's pull up everything we have. I want to know where he hangs out, who he knows, where his mother lives...

Another DETECTIVE comes in with a piece of paper for Strode.

DETECTIVE
Nothing on that Sutton girl. No priors, no nothing.

Strode looks over the paper. Nods to himself. Turns back to the computer. He pauses on the picture of Lorenz blown-up from an earlier surveillance photo.

DET. STRODE
Lookit that... his hair...

We CLOSE IN on the back of Lorenz's head, where initials are shaved into the back of his fade: "A.P."

JAMISON
What's that? "A.P.?"

DET. STRODE
A nickname? "Asshole Perhaps?"

They all laugh.

13 INT. PAN PACIFIC BANK - SAN FRANCISCO DAY

13

Frankie is sitting, talking to the branch MANAGER. She's clearly upset.

FRANKIE

I worked here for three years! When I left, you SAID
I could always have my old job back!!

MANAGER

Frankie, I know... but --

FRANKIE

I'm OVER-qualified. I'd be takin' a cut in pay... you
seen my resumé now!!

MANAGER

It's not that, honey... we just can't take the risk of
having someone here who might --

Before he can finish, Frankie stands up like she's been shot. The
force of it knocks the CHAIR over with a resounding CRASH.

FRANKIE

You too? Y'all can't look at me with your EYES? With
your heart? All ya do is listen to BULLSHIT????

She storms out, leaving a piercing silence.

14

EXT. PAN PACIFIC BANK - DAY

14

Frankie sits on the bottom steps, rocking back and forth, crying,
whispering to herself.

DISSOLVE TO:

15

EXT. OAKLAND HOUSING PROJECT - NIGHT

15

Impoverished housing project in one of the poorest neighborhoods in
the Bay Area. As we CLOSE IN it becomes evident that a big block
party is in progress. The street's roped off. A DJ's set up. Folks
is gettin' down, eating barbecue. On the hood of a gorgeous Impala,
Frankie sits in the same position we last saw her, hugging her legs,
knees drawn up to her chest. Only now she's surrounded by her girls.
Tisean, Cleo and Stony.

A bottle of tequila and four shot glasses are set up on the fender of
the car.

CLEO

Damn, but nigga, you still my peeps, even if you is a
broke bitch, like the rest of us. Jus' watch yo' feet
on my --

Stony elbows her.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I jus' buffed the fuck outta --

Shuts up again as Stony gives her another look.

CLEO (CONT'D)

...Cuervo is talkin' to a Negro.

Cleo gets up, swallows the shot, shivers.

STONY

You probably WANTED in three states for that car.

Cleo shrugs.

CLEO

Nah. Jus' parts of it. I stole the body many moons ago in --

STONY

I don't want to know.

FRANKIE (to Stony)

You think y'all could find me a job wit' Luther?

Stony nods.

STONY

I can work it.

CLEO (out of the blue)

Nigga got away with twenty grand. Go on Lorenz, crazy muthafucker. Damn, we should rob a bank.

TISEAN

Naw... thas' wrong. You can't... play around with that.

Her eyes meet Cleo's. Even talking about it makes her nervous.

TISEAN (CONT'D)

You CAN'T.

CLEO (leaning in, serious)

I'm telling you, for real though, the four of us could take that bank. If that crackhead Darnell could rob a bank, we could rob a bank.

Cleo pours another shot into everyone's shot glass. They toast and down the tequila, suck on lemons. Stony smiles.

STONY

Twenty grand would just about save my life right now. Too bad we all ain't some hard-up crackhead motherfuckers like Lorenz and them.

Everyone is suddenly quiet. Stony's authority has a way of putting things in perspective.

STONY (CONT'D)

Because then, sure, we could do some suicidal shit like rob a bank.

Frankie looks up. The crazed look in her eyes hasn't left.
Something has snapped in this girl.

FRANKIE

They done caused me too much grief. An' they gonna
pay...

No one quite hears her.

In the b.g. we SEE URSULA, 19, approach. A beautiful lanky girl
with an understated look. Cleo stands up tall, a smile brightening
up her face.

CLEO

Come HERE baby!!!

Ursula drapes herself all over Cleo, clearly in love.

STONY

How ya doin', Ursula?

FRANKIE

What's up?

Ursula just nods shyly.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Fuck is up wit' dat?

TISEAN

She doesn't really talk...

Cleo and Ursula are so absorbed in each other they don't hear any of
this.

CLEO (whispers)

Look, look, baby. I put a new engine in --

She shoos everyone off the hood of the car and opens it up. We can
just SEE her arms pointing out different features of the car's
insides as Ursula nods accordingly, pretending to look interested.
As the girls move around to the side of the car, someone catches
Stony's eye: NATE, 53, salt-and-pepper hair, well-preserved, is
coming down the block towards them.

TISEAN

Stony. Look. Nate Andrews. Didn't he want you to
come work fo' him at his dealership?

STONY

That's not ALL he wanted.

Nate winks, a smile for Stony. Clearly, he likes her. We can see
the wheels turning in Stony's head. An idea forming. She gets up,
walks over to Nate.

NATE

What you got goin', sweetheart?

STONY
Hey, Nate. What you been up to?

NATE
Mmm... Lookin' fo' you.

STONY
Oh REALLY?

NATE
I BEEN wantin' to get wit' you...

Stony smiles. A calculated flirt.

STONY
So. How much money DO you make selling cars?

NATE
Depends. You can make twenty grand in a month, on commissions.

STONY
Really? You make that much?

NATE
I tol' you. Instead of pissin' around with these busy-headed B-boys who can't do jackshit for ya ... you need to get with someone who can help you.

STONY
Someone like you...

NATE (DRAWS ON HIS
cigarette) That's right. I been trying to get you to come to work for me, Stony. You could sell ice to an Eskimo.

STONY
I could, huh? Well... how 'bout you give me an advance to show me how much faith you got in me?

NATE
I could do that. But Stony Newkirk's gotta give me a reason to do that.

STONY
So what do you want, Nate?

NATE (eyeing her firm body)
... you know...

Stony throws back another shot. Look of determination in her eyes.

STONY
A grand... as an advance.

NATE
An advance?

Stony shifts to one hip, letting some thigh show from under her skirt. A beat.

NATE (CONT'D)

My car's jus' down the block.

ANGLE - TISEAN

the baby in her arms. Cleo looks her up and down.

CLEO

You never gonna meet a man if you take that baby wit' you to every party, girl.

TISEAN (softly)

I don't want to meet a man.

Her eyes follow Stony as Nate puts a possessive arm at her back, leading her away.

TISEAN (CONT'D)

I got all I need.

She looks after Stony, a sadness in her eyes.

16

EXT. STREET - OAKLAND HOUSING PROJECT - NIGHT

16

Stony waits as Nate unlocks the passenger door. She looks around, makes sure no one's watching. Lights of an approaching vehicle glare in her eyes. She gets in.

17

INT. CAR - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

17

They drive on in uncomfortable silence. Beats; then:

STONY

So when do I get the advance?

Nate looks at her.

NATE

Tomorrow. Maybe the day after.

STONY

Before we do this, I want a check.

A beat.

NATE

I'm not giving you a check 'til I'm done.

STONY

Oh. So you gonna wait an' see if you like it? Jesus!

NATE

If you wanna call it off, I'll take you back to the projects, that ain't a problem.

STONY (masking)

Yeah, take me back... this ain't right...

18

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

18

Nate turns his car around; heads back to the projects.

19

INT. CAR - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

19

Stony opens her door. She senses that Nate is angry but he's acting cool.

She pushes the heavy Cadillac door open. Leans back into the car from the window.

STONY

I need the money, Nate...

NATE

Some other time, baby.

He starts the ENGINE. Stony pauses, pensively leans on the ajar car door. Torn.

STONY

I need the money.

They stare at one another. She REENTERS, closes the car door behind her.

20

INT. CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT

20

They ENTER the room. She walks around. Neon from the cheap hotel across the street splashes into their room. She's nervous.

STONY

Is, ah... you got nothing to drink? Let's go get a bottle...

NATE

No.

STONY

They deliver...

NATE (TAKES HIS SHIRT

off) No, I don't want liquor on your breath.

He approaches her, holds her breast in his hand. She can't look him in the eye. He turns her face toward his and devours her lips. His tongue moves aggressively in her mouth.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT - LATER

21

Nate is screwing her hard; a CACOPHONY of BEDSPRINGS SINGS beneath them.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT - LATER

22

The neon splashes on their quiet silhouettes. He toys with her hair. Kisses her breast.

STONY

... you said only an hour...

NATE

I didn't know we was punching a time clock...

STONY (rising)

... deal's-a-deal...

Nate kisses her neck, pushes her shoulders down, back into the bed.

NATE (whispers)

You want your check?... let me hit it one more time...

23 INT. HOTEL SHOWER - NIGHT - ONE HOUR LATER

23

Stony is washing the memory away. She shivers, even under the hot water. A sob escapes her. In the b.g. we can SEE Nate watching the basketball game intensely, sprawled out and satisfied on the bed.

24 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

24

Stony crosses the street, the neon from the hotel sign washing over her -- walks back to the projects.

25 INT. OFFICE - NEXT NIGHT

25

Stony is cleaning the office, prepping it for Cleo's buffer. Tisean is quietly disinfecting surfaces. In the b.g. we can HEAR some loud CRASHING and BANGING. Cleo ENTERS.

CLEO

Fuck izzat?

STONY

Frankie. Her first night.

Cleo nods, takes a seat on one of the desks as Stony continues to work. Cleo picks up a family photo: smiling wife, husband and toddler. White middle-class bliss. Off the photo:

CLEO

White folks be having some ugly ass babies, big bald, water-head boy...

Suddenly Frankie APPEARS, big garbage dispensers in each hand. There's an enraged look in her eyes.

FRANKIE

I can't unload these goddamn things without dropping them!!!

She explodes, throwing a CAN across the room where it CRASHES with a loud BANG. Her eyes are wet, a tear rolls down her face as she runs and punches a wall repeatedly. Stony finally grabs her wrist.

STONY

Yo, yo. Frankie. Chill!

Cleo backs her, standing behind Stony. This violent outburst has clearly shaken them both. Frankie sinks to the ground slowly, sitting on the floor. Stony finally puts a comforting arm around her.

FRANKIE

Jesus. How can you stand the smell of this garbage?

CLEO

It ain't that bad --

FRANKIE (interrupting)

My life is shit.

She looks up.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

It's over, Stony. I always done the right thing. An' my life is shit.

26

INT. WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

26

Crowded with the poor and disenfranchised, primarily women with one child in hand and another on the hip. A CASEWORKER, black woman, 38, is instructing a non-English-speaking Latin woman to follow the red line to Window 8. No compiendo. The CAMERA FINDS Stony and Tiscan sitting in the waiting room. On Tiscan's lap is her son, Jajuan.

TISEAN (quietly)

Frankie hates me. Ever since Terrell.

STONY

That wasn't YOUR fault. She was a bitch to Terrell.

TISEAN

I get scared workin' wit' her. Sometime, when she's pushin' that mop... I think she might just whack me in the face wit' it.

Stony laughs.

STONY

We ALL thinkin' 'bout that!

CASEWORKER (O.S.)

Tisean Williams...

She gathers the baby and ENTERS:

27

INT. CASEWORKER'S CUBICLE - DAY

27

CASEWORKER

Tisean Williams? I'm sorry, but according to our records, we're going to discontinue your benefits this Monday.

TISEAN

No please! You can't cut my money off!

The Caseworker pulls her file up on the computer.

CASEWORKER (OFF THE COMPUTER

screen) Ah, the termination of benefits is based on the reporting of unclaimed income... Luther's Janitorial Service.

TISEAN

That's just a part-time job, ma'am... I can't feed my baby off of AFDC alone.

CASEWORKER

I'm sorry, but your employer reported fifty-two hundred dollars in income for the first three quarters...

TISEAN

Oh God... oh God... What'm I gonna do? So I should quit my job and stay on assistance?

CASEWORKER

That's your decision...

TISEAN

I can't live off of either one, alone... and I can't work for Luther full-time...

TISEAN (CONT'D)

I'd pay as much for baby-sitting as I would be making pumping a mop... (to the baby) Jajuan, sit still...

28

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

28

The girls have just finished a janitorial detail; they load the equipment into the van. Cleo bangs on the door, pulls away. The girls climb into Cleo's '64 Impala convertible.

29

EXT. STREET - DAY

29

The Impala races through the blighted streets of Oakland, top down, rap MUSIC BLARING -- PUMPED. Cleo, Stony, Frankie and Tisean. They drive up into a hilly region overlooking an abandoned Goodyear Tire plant. They're drinking 40's and smoking on a fat Philly blunt full of chronic.

ANGLE - CLEO

gasping to keep the thick marijuana smoke in her lungs... until they explode... engulfing her in a cloudy plume.

CLEO

Ooooh, that's the shit... Philly blunt talking to a mothafucker... the tasty way.

She passes the blunt cigar. They're laughing in this cloud of drug-induced euphoria. Cleo reaches into the back seat and grabs Frankie's breast.

FRANKIE (pushing her away)

Chill, Cleo. You always gettin' high and grabbing on people. Stop illing.

CLEO

Check out Stony... that chronic always gets her quiet. Sitting over there thinking her ass off. Zoned. Pickled. You fucked up, ain't ya girl?

Frankie starts giggling. They all start laughing uproariously from the back seat. Cleo picks up that she is the object of their laughter.

CLEO (CONT'D)

What's wrong wit' y'all?

STONY

You know...

Stony, Tisean and Frankie laugh uncontrollably, infectiously.

TISEAN

We... can't help it, Cleo...

CLEO

Y'all cold...

STONY

We get high... and every time, without fail, you start looking like Sugar Bear... we twenty-one now, but you still lookin' like Sugar Bear.

FRANKIE (singing the jingle)

"... Can't get enough of those Sugar Crisps, can't get enough of those Sugar Crisps..."

TISEAN

Funny thing about it is, you don't start lookin' like Sugar Bear until we high.

CLEO

Fuck all y'all... (sotto) Simple bitches.

FRANKIE

Ah, Cleo don't get salty...

Cleo looks out at the abandoned Goodyear plant. Thinks for several beats.

CLEO

Before they closed that plant they was paying folks fifteen dollars an hour.

FRANKIE

Stop trying to change the subject ... Sugar Bear.

CLEO

Damn. For fifteen dollars an hour I'd be bitch... four-ply radials... Goodyear Eagles, steel-belted Wrangler ATs, all that stuff. For fifteen dollars an hour they'd have to pull me off of that machine. Overtime'd be twenty-two-fifty an hour.

She whistles. Tisean shakes her head.

TISEAN

I don't know what I'm gon' do. I got no money now. (quietly) I'm 'onna have to leave Jajuan with my grandpa while I work.

STONY

That's crazy. He's OLD to be changin' diapers.

TISEAN

Thas' all I got! I don't have the money.

FRANKIE

Only one way we ever gon' see cash... is we take a bank.

CLEO

I'm with THAT. I heard alla' Darnell's homeys got, like ninety gran' each.

STONY

You want to end up dead, like Darnell?

CLEO

The fuck cares? We gonna end up dead anyways... Cold sweatin' bullet in the back, bleed out on a goddamn marble floor. Maybe thas' it, the way to go.

STONY

We ain't talkin' 'bout this shit no more.

The girls are all silent.

30

INT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

30

Stony walks in and Stevie's on the phone. An envelope lies on the ground, pushed under the crack in the door. She reaches down and picks it up. We can HEAR STEVIE TALKING in the b.g.

STEVIE (INTO PHONE; FORCED

excitement) Yeah... yeah it's cool... it's in Chicago... uh-uh... snow in the winter an' alla' that.

Stony tears open the envelope. Looks at the check in her hand. It's made out to her. One thousand. She smiles, runs over to Stevie.

STONY (mouthing)

Hang UP!

STEVIE (hand on receiver)

NO!

STONY

I SAID, hang up!...

He's about to turn his back on her when she flashes the check at him.

STEVIE (into phone)

Got to go... I'll be over... yeah... sure...

He hangs up.

STONY (quietly)

Yo' sis came through for you, or what?

He stares at the check, incredulous.

STEVIE

Jesus... what'd --

Stony looks away.

STONY

Gotta new job...

STEVIE
Doing WHAT?

STONY
... and they gave me an advance.

Changing the subject:

STONY (CONT'D)
All right. Baby brother... let's celebrate. I'm
taking you OUT!

STEVIE
I'm 'onna get dat bottle of Moet Lorenz's Moms got me.

Stony rolls her eyes.

STONY
Fine. I'll pick you up over at that hoodlum's --

Stevie puts an arm around her, nodding.

STEVIE
Cool. Jus' gimme half an hour, I'll meet ya
outside... Lemme jus' get my Moet...

31

EXT.ACORN PROJECTS - NIGHT

31

Stevie ENTERS one of the rundown townhouses that make up the Acorn
Projects.

32

INT.LORENZ' APARTMENT - NIGHT

32

True gangsta pad. Guns and ammo, etc... Lorenz hugs Stevie, grabs a
gun, shoves it in Stevie's pants.

LORENZ
Take that shit to school with you, homey. Any of them
Ivy League motherfuckers disrespect you... pay them no
mind. Jus' WHACK 'em out while they playin' GOLF or
some shit.

Stevie laughs, shakes his head.

STEVIE
Yeah... well. Not my style, Lorenz.

He grabs the gun out of his pants and hands it back to Lorenz.

33

EXT. ACORN PROJECTS - NIGHT

33

An unmarked van pulls up to the projects. Two PLAINCLOTHES
DETECTIVES set themselves up by the front and back of the townhouse.
Quietly, the SPECIAL UNIT SWAT TEAM files out, climbs up a fire
escape to the roof.

Another unit takes the townhouse across the street.

34

INT. POLICE VAN - NIGHT

34

Strode and Donner are inside the van, briefing the SPECIAL DUTY COMMAND OFFICER (C.O.), who'll be calling the shots.

DET. STRODE

... our man is there... alone with his girl. There's tons of ammo --

DONNER

We've got the perimeters covered?

DET. STRODE

Affirmative.

The C.O. leaves the van under cover.

35

INT. LORENZ' APARTMENT - NIGHT

35

Lorenz turns his back on Stevie to get a beer.

Stevie notices the neatly-shaved initials in the back of his head.
"A.P."

STEVIE

Cool...

Lorenz turns around.

LORENZ

"Acorn Projects."

STEVIE

Yo. That's dope.

Lorenz turns to his girlfriend, TANIKA.

LORENZ

Tanika? Do 'im up...

TANIKA

He ain't Acorn...

LORENZ

Fuck that. College boy here is mah homey.

She sighs. Sits Stevie in a chair by an outlet. Gets Lorenz's beard trimmer/razor.

36

EXT. ACORN PROJECTS - NIGHT

36

SWAT team, like shadowed vultures, watch from the roof.

37 INT. STAIRWELL - ACORN PROJECTS - NIGHT 37

Stevie whistles, skipping down the stairs. The bottle of Moet is in a paper bag in his hand as he EXITS.

38 EXT. ACORN PROJECTS - NIGHT 38

Stevie pauses. It seems too quiet. Something is in the air.

39 INT. POLICE VAN - NIGHT 39

Strode listens over the walkie.

C.O. (V.O.)
It's him. We got your man.

DET. STRODE (into walkie)
I.D. him, C.O.

C.O. (V.O.)
Six foot, African-American... the initials "A.P."
shaved on the back of his head.

40 EXT. ACORN PROJECTS STREET - NIGHT 40

Strode steps out of the van and starts to move towards Stevie. Stevie doesn't see him, pulls the bottle out of the bag to admire it. As he brings it up, the streetlight catches his face. There's a sudden panic over the walkie as the bottle is spotted, and appears to be pointed at Strode.

WALKIE
He's taking aim...

C.O. (V.O.)
Shoot!!!

Strode sees Stevie's face. But it's too late. A rain of SEMI-AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE EXPLODES.

DET. STRODE
Nooooo!!!

The CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE EXPLODES. Then a bullet catches Stevie in the heart. It jerks him back. His eyes, innocent, puzzled and strangely unaware, lock with Strode's. Strode runs over, Donner on his tail. They check Stevie. He's dead.

41 INT. LORENZ' APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT 41

The SWAT unit just around Lorenz's apartment door, kicks their way in. Gets Lorenz and his Tanika unaware. Cuffs them down.

DISSOLVE TO

42

EXT. ACORN PROJECTS - NIGHT

42

as Stony approaches the Acorn Projects, she sees the police. Starts whispering to herself as she breaks into a run.

STONY

No, no, no, no... Lord Jesus have mercy... no, no, no...

She pushes through the people gathered, watching. And then she sees the body. Her brother, a red puddle spreading underneath him. She screams, a scream that carries with it the loss of every broken heart, a mother's shattered dreams, despair. She throws herself on Stevie's body, still screaming. The police try to pull her off. Her strength is tremendous as she rocks her dead brother.

43

EXT. ACORN PROJECTS - DAWN

43

Same spot, now early morning. Tisean, Frankie and Cleo have their arms around Stony, pulling her back from the ambulance as it drives away with Stevie's body. She is sick with grief, nearly delirious.

STONY

Lemme go... lemme go with him please... maybe he's gonna get better... maybe.

CLEO

Stony. He's dead. Thas' it. He didn't make it, sister.

She hugs Stony who sobs on her shoulder.

In the b.g. Det. Strode watches, clearly upset, but unable to fully let it show. He walks over to Stony. Hands her his card.

DET. STRODE

(trying to be comforting) Ms. Newkirk?... If you have any questions or anything... don't hesitate to call. We'll be carrying out a full investigation on this.

Frankie stares at Strode; they recognize each other.

FRANKIE (under her breath)

Not THIS motherfucker...

Stony looks at him with cold, dead eyes. Then suddenly lunges for him, like a wild animal. The girls pull her back. Quickly hustle her into Cleo's Impala. Strode rubs his temples, watching the Impala take off, his conscience like a bad headache, bugging him. Jamison comes up to him with more info.

JAMISON

Stevie Newkirk... no priors... straight-A student. Both parents killed in a fire twelve years ago. He just got into Willamette University.

Strode looks away. He can't bear this. His voice is gravelly, choked.

DET. STRODE

Damn it. Goddamn it.

He crumples the paper up in his fist.

44

INT. IMPALA - DAY

44

Tisean is cradling Stony in the back. Up front, Frankie holds Jajuan, the baby.

TISEAN

She needs water with it...

Frankie reaches back, handing Tisean a small pill.

CLEO

All's I got is beer.

Tisean takes the beer.

FRANKIE

You sure this ain't some horse tranquilizer an' shit?

CLEO

Fuck no. It's valium.

Suddenly, Stony sees something out the window. She screams.

STONY

Pull over!!!

Cleo does. Before Tisean can grab hold of her she runs out and into Nate's car dealership. The girls run after her.

45

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

45

Stony, her hand spotted with Stevie's blood, runs up to Nate. The woman he's trying to sell steps back, shocked. Stony reaches in her pocket. The girls watch as she pulls out the check. Rips it up.

STONY (dazed)

I don't need this. I don't need you or this job.
It's all over. I don't need shit anymore...

She weaves a bit. Nate looks concerned.

NATE

Stony? What happened?

Once again the women drag her out, away from Nate. Protecting her.

46

INT. PROJECTS - STONY'S BEDROOM - DAY

46

Stony lies on the bed. Too fucked-up now to feel her grief.

FRANKIE

Y'know Cleo is right, we could take that bank.

CLEO (inebriated)

...we could do it... we don't have a damn thing to lose.

Stony sits up. She shakes her head.

STONY

I'm dead now. That was my life that jus' bled out on the street. Fuck this... fuck it...

She starts crying again. The others look at each other.

They've never seen her like this.

CLEO

I say we take the bank. Get Stony outta this town.

FRANKIE

Sister is right. This is it for us... We ain't never gonna be more than we are right now and we ain't shit... right now.

TISEAN

Y'all's drunk. I got mah baby to think about. I ain't robbin' no BANK.

They look over at Stony. She's out, dead asleep. Cleo tenderly pulls a blanket over her shoulders.

47

EXT. STEVIE'S FUNERAL - DAY

47

The women hold Stony as Stevie's body is laid into the ground. Stevie's friends and teachers, one by one, hug Stony as they leave. She's strong again, standing tall, putting on a dignified farewell for her brother.

DISSOLVE TO:

48

INT. BAR - NIGHT

48

Stony is getting drunk with a vengeance. Frankie and Cleo let her as she follows one shot with another.

49

EXT. BAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT (ONE HOUR LATER)

49

Stony is leaning over the Impala throwing up. She lifts her head up. Wipes her mouth.

CLEO
Damn.

FRANKIE
Who's gonna stay wit' her?

CLEO
I will.

Stony looks at each of them.

STONY
I was inna bat'room... takin' a shower before de funeral... an' I see Stevie's razor... an' dese little hairs is still inna razor.

Her body is racked with a sob. She hiccoughs.

STONY (CONT'D)
I jus' lef' it there. Thas' all I gotta mah baby brother... them little hairs...

Frankie hugs her hard as she cries. Stony raises her head, looks at the girls.

STONY (CONT'D)
I can't go in there no more. I can't go inna bathroom. I can't look at his half-eaten cereal inna sink... I gotta get outta here --

CLEO
Stay wit' me.

STONY
No. I mean OUTTA here.

They all look at each other. Knowing this is a turning point in their lives.

50

INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

50

Sparsely furnished. Stony rises slowly, head throbbing from a nightmarish hangover. Cleo's sitting at the card table. Frankie is sleeping on the floor, slowly awakens.

CLEO (a beat)
You okay, Stony girl?

Stony nods, her composure back.

FRANKIE
For real though, I was very serious about taking the bank.

STONY
Maybe. Maybe that's just what we should fuckin' do.

Dead silence. The girls are surprised. She shakes her head.

STONY (CONT'D)

Damn. I never thought I'd say that.

Cleo and Frankie watch her carefully.

STONY (CONT'D)

All of a sudden, I don't see why NOT.

FRANKIE

I love niggers, but one thing I don't love about niggers is... niggers are scared of revolution ... "Oh, I was just talking, I was just playing." Niggers play too much. And Darnell is just a loc-ed out G, but he came and took his! Yo, this is our wake-up call y'all. We can do this.

STONY

I don't know. I don't know. This time next week you and Cleo could be stretched out in front of the bank in wet t-shirts.

CLEO

I can go out like that... it's this shit I can't take.

Beats of pensive silence.

CLEO (CONT'D) (gently but sternly serious)

Can we take that bank, Frankie?

Frankie stares back at her, says nothing.

51

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

51

While on their janitorial detail the women take time out to have a smoke. They sit around the loading dock. Frankie pulls something out of her pocket. It's a piece of paper. She unfolds it. It's a crude blueprint of the Pan Pacific Bank floor plan. Stony looks up.

STONY

You gettin' serious, huh?

FRANKIE

Hell yeah! (a beat) And so are you.

They look at each other. Frankie's called it. Tisean shakes her head.

TISEAN (squeamish)

Y'all gonna have to do this one without me.

But she leans over to look at the blueprint anyway.

FRANKIE

Look... here's --

Stony interrupts her.

STONY

I don't know about this... I mean ... I keep thinkin' about Darnell gettin' kilt... an' Lorenzo taken in and Stevie --

FRANKIE

Thas' because Darnell an' them were fools. They didn't know half a what I know.

STONY

What if it... if it goes wrong...

TISEAN

I don't want you to hurt nobody --

STONY

Yeah. We can't do this and get some innocent person shot up... make they families suffer the way I have? Thas' not --

FRANKIE

Listen to me! You all are just scared! No one will get hurt. Thas' why this is the perfect crime. I know this shit too well.

TISEAN

But what about all the folks' money that you're taking?

Cleo rolls her eyes.

CLEO

Insurance... dumb ass comment --

FRANKIE

Every bank is fully insured. We just takin' away from the system that fucked us anyway.

They all look to Stony.

STONY

So.

A beat.

STONY (CONT'D)

Let's hear the plan.

Frankie and Cleo exchange a look. They get down to business. Frankie points out the locations of surveillance cameras and where she wants her posse positioned.

Cleo sidles up to a big-time dealer named GRAND D. He nods to her.

'Sup, Cleo? GRAND D.

Need a favor. CLEO

Yeah? GRAND D.

CLEO
You know you owe me one for not rollin' on ya when they picked me up.

GRAND D.
Okay. I owe you.

CLEO (pulls out a 9mm)
We want three Nina's just like this one. Good shit, clean numbers.

He nods.

GRAND D.
It's gonna cost ya.

CLEO
Then it ain't a favor. I need a FAVOR.

He thinks.

GRAND D.
All right. For you.

53

INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

53

The foursome is having beers as Frankie briefs them on banking procedures. From the full ashtray, empty Fritos bag and beer bottles we sense they have been meeting for hours.

FRANKIE
... and at this branch the tellers have ten-thousand-dollar drawer limits. So Cleo, you take the note to the merchant teller. She will have at least twenty grand.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
On Wednesdays Sears makes a big deposit so she could have thirty-five thousand.

CLEO
I give her the note and tell her not to give me any bait money.

FRANKIE
Tell her not to draw from the right-hand clip. (miming a cash drawer) If she takes money from the right-hand clip she's setting off the silent alarm.

CLEO

I say, "No bait money and if you come out of that right-hand clip my gat is going in your mouth, bitch."

FRANKIE (hyped)

Yeah. That's what I'm talking about.

STONY

Let's go through Plan B.

CLEO

Plan B! Damn! Why can't we go popping and just fuck muthafuckers up and snatch the money. Nix this planning shit. Get sinister with these muthafuckers.

STONY

That's not our flow; why don't you cool out?

FRANKIE

Plan B: Stony, when Cleo goes to the merchant teller you survey the line for the cow.

CLEO

A cow? There's going to be a cow up in this muthafuckin'?

STONY

You was outside smoking that blunt when she told us about the cow.

FRANKIE

The cow is a small vault on wheels, they push it from window to window depending on which teller needs cash. If the cow is there, it'll be open, and it will have at least fifty thousand.

STONY

If I see the cow, and it's open, I jump over the counter, make everybody hit the floor and empty the cow while Cleo covers me. If there's no cow, we don't draw our guns, we do this smooth, ladylike.

TISEAN

I can't believe y'all is doing this... I don't want to... lose y'all --

Stony gives her a comforting squeeze.

FRANKIE

Remember, once you pass the note, assume that the teller has triggered the alarm. From that point we got two and a half minutes. Don't get greedy, just take the cash she's able to dump in ninety seconds.

CLEO

Two and a half minutes is a long time if we do this right, focus ... be on. I taken a vehicle in less time 'n that.

54

INT. TISEAN'S GRANDFATHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

54

Tisean walks into a badly-deteriorating old house.

The old man, Tisean's GRANDFATHER, in his 80's, sits on a chair listening to a Mahalia Jackson RECORD.

TISEAN

You sure this is okay, Poppa?

GRANDPA

'Course. I taken care of hundreds a babies, Lorraine.

TISEAN

It's Tisean. Lorraine is my cousin.

He stares at her.

GRANDPA

I don' know no Tisean...

TISEAN

Sure you do! Sissy's daughter.

Tisean hurriedly sets up Jajuan's playpen and things.

GRANDPA

Now where'd that Sissy get to? She's always gettin' in a heap o' trouble.

TISEAN

Poppa? Mama's dead a long time ago.

He doesn't seem to hear. Tisean talks to the baby.

TISEAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sweetpea. Little butter bean. I got to work. Got no money for a baby-sitter.

She grabs her Grandpa's hands.

TISEAN (CONT'D)

Give him a bottle in a couple hours, then --

GRANDPA

I done this a million times, sugar. You jus' leave it to me.

TISEAN

Everything's in the fridge.

She gives the baby one last squeeze.

TISEAN (CONT'D)

You gonna be fine.

He looks after her, worried, as she leaves.

55

INT. TISEAN'S GRANDFATHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

55

Grandpa has the baby on one hip as he stands over the stove, cooing to it.

GRANDPA

Baby baby sweet baby... bap bah bah...

He puts some grits in a pan with a heap of butter, starts frying. He puts a cover on the pan and takes the baby with him over to his easy chair. He settles in, turning on the TV.

DISSOLVE TO:

56

INT. TISEAN'S GRANDFATHER'S APARTMENT

56

Grandpa's eyes have dropped closed. The room is filled with smoke. Baby Jajuan crawls off Grandpa's lap. He doesn't wake up.

57

EXT. TISEAN'S GRANDFATHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

57

as Tisean and Stony come running up to the house. Police stand outside. A NEIGHBOR in slippers and curlers stands there, telling a cop what happened.

NEIGHBOR

... to call the fire department ... that baby was screaming... Child Protective Services came and picked him up --

Tisean grabs a policeman.

TISEAN

My baby?! Where's my baby?!

The Neighbor gives her a dirty look.

NEIGHBOR

Oh. YOU the mother.

58

INT. WELFARE OFFICE - NEXT DAY

58

The Caseworker is tending to another client when Tisean storms into the cubicle.

TISEAN

Where's my baby?

CASEWORKER

Tisean, I'm with another client.

TISEAN

Where is my child?

CASEWORKER

Ms. Lopez, please excuse us for one minute.

TISEAN

I want my baby back.

CASEWORKER

If someone hadn't heard him, you wouldn't have a child to get back, Tisean. Your grandfather was asleep. Jajuan was crying and a grease fire was about to engulf the entire apartment.

TISEAN

I want my son.

CASEWORKER

Where were you?

TISEAN

At work...

CASEWORKER

Perhaps the extra money isn't worth placing Jajuan in jeopardy. (clears her throat) Within the next three days you'll receive a notice for your court date. A court date will be set within thirty days from today. At that time, the judge will decide if you can get custody of your baby. You'll have to prove that you can be responsible for Jajuan by showing documentation of financial solvency, as well as getting the money together for childcare, in advance for one year. Jajuan will remain in protective custody until you secure acceptable childcare or resign your job and stay home.

TISEAN

What?... I don't... How can I stay home? How'm I gonna feed him? When can I get him?...

She's nearly hysterical.

CASEWORKER

Like I said, your court date will be set. AT THAT TIME, the judge will decide what will happen.

TISEAN

No... no... please let me just have him... You don't understand... I'm... I'm...gonna die without my baby... I'm gonna die!

59

EXT. WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

59

Tisean is crying, fighting to get back in. People on the street have stopped to stare. Stony arrives and begins to struggle with her.

TISEAN

Please lemme back in...

STONY

Jajuan isn't in there, Tisean!!! Come on. We got to get you some money before you go to court.

Tisean calms down. They look at each other.

STONY (CONT'D)

Thas' right. Are you in?

A long beat. Tisean wipes her nose.

TISEAN

Do I have to hold a gun? I... I don' wanna touch a gun...

Stony smiles.

STONY

We're gonna get the fuck outta here.

60

INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

60

A long line of impatient customers winds through the lobby. We FOLLOW the line to Tisean. Stony sits in a deep couch waiting for customer service. They are casing the bank, studying every square inch of the place. The guard is reading a newspaper.

Stony is wearing a dress, browsing through a bin of bank brochures.

KEITH WESTON, 29, black, sharp Italian suit, ENTERS the retail area from his office. His eyes go immediately to Stony. He picks up the customer service sign-in sheet.

INSERT - LIST

It reads: "MARK HAMILTON, JOHN FULGRUM, LEDA NEWKIRK."

BACK TO SCENE

KEITH

Leda Newkirk?

MARK HAMILTON

I thought I was next in line.

Keith ignores him. Keith is a handsome guy, yuppie-ish grooming. Stony follows him into:

61

INT. BANK OFFICE - DAY

61

KEITH

How can I help you today, Ms. Newkirk?

STONY

I want to open a checking account.

KEITH

Fine, Ms. Newkirk. Actually if you have a thousand-dollar deposit, I can start an interest-bearing checking account for you.

Keith glimpses Stony eyeing a family photo of a white man and two white children on the desk Keith is sitting at.

STONY

No, I only have four hundred. Does this bank have long lines? ... I hate long lines...

KEITH

We typically operate with ten tellers, Ms. Newkirk. Actually I'm in corporate banking upstairs... (turning the photo face-down) ... but I said to myself: a woman that fine should have her own personal banker. I'm new in town and would very much like to know you better.

A woman is carrying a cash drawer full of fresh bills; the place is ripe for plucking. Even though Stony is checking it all out, she can't help but be intrigued by Keith's charm.

62

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

62

Stony opens a utility closet and lifts a large bucket into the sink, starts running water into the bucket. Tisean ENTERS with a large mop.

STONY

... What's wrong?... You nervous?

TISEAN

Mm-hmm...

STONY

We planned everything down to the finest detail.

TISEAN

Remember, in seventh grade when y'all would go to Rexall's to... to shoplift? An' I couldn't even steal a Snickers?

Stony looks at her friend.

STONY

Cleo had no problem. An' me an' Frankie got caught.

She laughs..

STONY (CONT'D) (adding cleanser)

I swore I'd never steal again.

Tisean and Stony give each other a long, hard look.

STONY (CONT'D)

But this place stole from US, an' we jus' gettin' a little back.

Tisean nods.

63 EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY (TWO HOURS LATER)

63

Cleo climbs out of the Impala and walks about 50 meters through the structure. She pans the place for any onlooker. Sets her sights on a Lincoln parked a few feet away. When the coast is clear she masterfully sticks a locksmith's device into the door of the Lincoln, opens the door, yanks the ignition and hot-wires the car.

Works her screwdriver. Going through the man's tape collection trying to find some music to play. Throws rejected tapes out the window.

CLEO

Damn... Clint Black, Frank Sinatra... Eddie Money... what kinda bull is this?... Gimme some of that gangsta shit.

Cleo pulls out her own cassette, loads the tape, starts jamming to Notorious B.I.G. (or generic hip-hop from SOUNDTRACK).

64 INT. LINCOLN - MOVING - DAY

64

All four women are in the Lincoln. Stony's driving.

65 INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - DAY (MINUTES LATER)

65

Stony ENTERS the bank, steps into the winding line. She immediately notices that the place is in total construction chaos. Workmen move in and out. Security is beefed-up. She then looks around for Keith. He's not at his desk. She EXITS just as Cleo and Tisean ENTER. Cleo sees the mess.

66 INT. LINCOLN - MOVING - DAY

66

Tisean is listening to Sade on her Walkman, trying to escape the tension. (NOTE: We DO NOT HEAR this ABOVE WHAT IS ESCAPING HER HEADPHONES.)

FRANKIE (angrily)

Why didn't you rob the bank?! The construction makes no difference, you pass the note and take the damn money!

CLEO

There was guards everywhere...

FRANKIE

Y'all's lame...

Stony smiles to herself.

STONY

We're gonna get that bank. Construction or not. I got a date with the branch manager tonight.

FRANKIE

No!!

CLEO

Girl... use those womanly charms an' shit, you lowdown gangsta bitch!...

FRANKIE

So we ain't casin' no more banks tonight 'cause Miss Thing gotta date?

CLEO

Shut the fuck up, big mouth... This could be important.

Cleo veers to a curb.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Alla' y'all get out. This car is played for now. They gonna be lookin' for it tonight.

They get out and walk away from the Lincoln.

67

EXT. PROJECTS - NIGHT

67

Stony meets Keith in front of her building. They walk to his car. Their first date, with serious first-date tension.

KEITH

Why are you smiling?

STONY

... Nothing... no reason...

KEITH

C'mon, tell me...

STONY

I never went out with a guy wearing a suit.

KEITH (TAKES HIS NECKTIE

off) So, where we headed?... I'm new to the Bay Area. I've read about Hayes Street Grill, Postrio, Rubicon... you like those places?

STONY

Never heard of 'em...

KEITH

I thought you was Oaktown, around the way, girl...

STONY

That must be San Francisco, world of difference
between my side of Oakland and San Francisco.

KEITH

Well, show me something in your hood.

STONY

Don't try to sound street, you ain't got that flow.
Probably went to Harvard 'n all.

68

INT. SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

68

Keith and Stony dining over candlelight.

KEITH

Nice restaurant, black-owned, I like that. You come
here often?

STONY

... never been.

STONY (CONT'D)

I ain't gonna pay eighteen-ninety-five for a glazed
ham hock a l'orange. So, where are you from?

KEITH

D.C.

STONY

Isn't that where the mayor got popped basing-up?

KEITH

Nobody's perfect. It's a great town, I miss it. We
have a park, Rock Creek Park, in the fall the leaves
turn a million shades of brilliant orange, it looks
like the entire park is on fire, the leaves are so
bright. And in the winter after a fresh snow, all you
can see for miles are snow-covered trees. Maybe some
day I can take you there.

She gives him a look. He moves fast.

KEITH (CONT'D)

I moved here from New York though. (buttering his
bread) I was on the street and before that... B-
school.

STONY

What is B-school?

KEITH

Business school...

STONY

I wanted to go to business school.

KEITH

Marketing? Finance? Arbitrage?

STONY

Nah, typing and bookkeeping.

He laughs, she doesn't glean what is funny. Beats of silence as they eye one another and chew on their cornbread.

KEITH

Are you really this tough or are you just
perpetrating?

STONY

I'm not tough. You know, we don't have anything in
common...

KEITH

I know, but that's a good thing. I been out with too
many women that I have too much in common with... it's
boring. You seem real.

A reluctant smile spreads across her face.

STONY

So, what do you want from me, I'm just, y'know, from
around the way.

KEITH

I don't want anything from you. No demands, no
expectations. I'm just happy sitting at this table,
staring into those alluring brown eyes... and thinking
about that orange-glazed ham hock I ordered.

69

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

69

He opens the door, she ENTERS. Tastefully decorated. The best
quality of everything, furniture, art, books, electronics. She
saunters around like a child in a candy store.

KEITH

It's not much, I took the lease over from my brother,
he's the one who lured me to San Francisco.

He puts on soft MUSIC, returns with a tea set.

STONY

(observing his library;
off a book entitled
"Freedom")

Do you feel free?

KEITH (peculiar question)
I feel very free, away from eighty-hour weeks at
Goldman Sachs, yeah, I feel real free... and you?

STONY
No, I don't feel free. I always feel caged.

KEITH (pouring tea)
You're just a young girl... don't take life so
seriously.

STONY
Seriously? YOU lose everything an' tell 'em not to be
serious. My brother was jus' killed. For not one
good reason.

KEITH
I'm sorry.

STONY
My girl Cleo watched her daddy OD. Tisean's baby jus'
got taken from her. An' Frankie... Frankie's buggin'
out since some crackhead robber whacked an ole lady in
front o' her face.

A beat.

STONY (CONT'D)
An guess what? We STILL laughing.

KEITH
Damn. I didn't realize how... how hard...

His voice trails off. He doesn't know what to say.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Look. I'm here for you. You need something, call
me... I'm here for you.

Stony looks at him. She's moved by his concern.

70

EXT. STREET - DAY

70

Cleo, shades on, looks around. No one's watching. She quickly,
almost silently, breaks into an old Oldsmobile. She plays around
with the ignition, gets it started. As the engine is warming up, she
looks for some music. Again, nothing she likes.

CLEO (to herself)
Fuck is this... Pearl Jam?

She tosses a few CDs out of the car. Turns the RADIO dial until she
gets a House beat. She smiles. Yeah, that's the groove.

71

INT. BALBOA SAVINGS BANK - DAY

71

Cleo ENTERS, followed by Stony beats later. Tisean feigns filling out a deposit slip. Her eyes peruse the bank, noting the surveillance cameras, the security guards, the merchant teller. Cleo and Stony are casing the bank, staying out of sight of the surveillance cameras.

CLEO

So. You learn anything from yo' banker boy?

STONY

He's fine. THAS' what I learned.

Cleo rolls her eyes. Frankie ENTERS beats later, unexpectedly. Joins Tisean at the slip counter.

Tisean calmly does as she is told. Stony is not aware of Frankie's presence in the bank. Frankie lifts her bandanna over her face -- brandishes her gun, shouts at the tellers. Stony is shocked, angry. Following Frankie's lead, Cleo brandishes her gun at the teller. Stony has no choice but to back her up. They raise their bandannas, pull their weapons. Cleo jumps up on the counter and marches like a Gestapo agent before each teller, screaming instructions... manufacturing fear to keep all of the bank employees under her control, frightened and confused.

72

EXT. BALBOA SAVINGS BANK - DAY

72

Tisean walks toward the car, a motorcycle cop passes by. Tisean crosses the street to an approaching bus, boards the bus. As the bus CLEARS THE SCREEN we SEE:

STONY, FRANKIE & CLEO

run from the bank, jump into the Olds and race off, the sedan veering on two wheels.

73

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

73

Frankie is alone in the Olds. She parks on a quiet tree-lined street. She climbs out of the car and walks south. Minutes later Cleo and Stony APPEARS in the Impala. Frankie climbs in.

74

INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - DAY (ONE HOUR LATER)

74

Tisean ENTERS. Frankie is counting the money, big smile on her face. Tisean walks across the room; she's badly shaken.

TISEAN

You... you... could've gotten us killed!

FRANKIE

If I didn't set it off we'd be casing banks for the next two months. Y'all was shaking in your shoes, I had to push you.

STONY

Stop the fighting... we did it, it's done.

TISEAN

But... we, we was just casing. We wasn't ready to rob the joint.

CLEO

It worked, didn't it?

TISEAN

Maybe the next time... it won't work, Cleo!

STONY

It won't happen like this again so stop sweating us, Tisean. It's over. Thirty-two thousand, two hundred. Not bad for ninety seconds of work.

Cleo pushes Tisean toward Frankie, slowly they embrace, reluctantly, then they hold one another tight. Cleo tosses wads of money into their faces. Elation, laughter.

CLOSE - NECK OF CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE

being broken against the kitchen sink. The women scream in glee.

FRANKIE

We did it.

CLEO

Thirty-two thousand big ones... Party time.

Cleo pours champagne into her mouth from the jagged edges of the bottle. They laugh, then scream in frenzied excitement.

75

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

75

Det. Strode ENTERS as a group of robbery unit cops stands around, talking.

DET. JONES

Strode. Weren't you on that two-eleven in Oakland?

Strode shakes his head.

DET. STRODE

Yeah... but we got alla' them. This looks slicker. More inside.

His eyes search the place, looking for details. Come to rest on the broken CDs on the ground. His brow wrinkles into a frown.

76 INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

76

New clothes lie on the ground. Tons of food and booze. The girls have been spending some of their cash.

77 INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT NIGHT

77

CLOSE - TV SCREEN

A NEWS ANCHOR is reporting their story.

ANCHOR (TV)

... and in what may be an Oakland first... four women already dubbed the All Girl Posse robbed the MacArthur branch of Balboa Savings, getting away with an estimated ninety thousand dollars.

STONY

Ninety thousand, my butt.

ANCHOR

... This is the twenty-first bank robbery this year in Oakland, which, next to Los Angeles, is the bank robbery capital of the nation.

78 INT. DET. STRODE'S OFFICE - DAY

78

Strode goes through pictures of female robbery convictions. He's got a stack of mug shots. Nothing's clicking. He leans over to Jamison.

DET. STRODE

Jamison? Anything ever come up on Francesca Sutton... the girl at the two-eleven in Oakland?

JAMISON

Nothing. Clean as a whistle.

As Strode continues to look through mug shots, Cleo's picture comes up.

DET. STRODE

Mmm... Lemme see the footage again.

Jamison swivels a video monitor so that Strode can see the robbery. Sure enough, Cleo is captured ON CAMERA. Strode studies the picture. The bandanna hides her face too well, and Strode moves on.

79 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

79

Tiscan and Stony are walking home.

TISEAN

I feel bad, Stony. Like we did something so... so... bad.

At the intersection an older-model Benz pulls slowly to the curb. Three gangbangers peer out the tinted windows at Tisean and Stony. Tension fills the air for a moment. Stony rests her head on the 9mm she still has tucked into her jeans. The bangers pause, then move on.

STONY

... We gotta get outta Oaktown...

TISEAN

Where you gonna go?

STONY

I don't know... somewhere where it's clean... where you don't have to look over your shoulder every waking minute... I need peace... I need peace bad.

A long beat.

TISEAN

I'm afraid we gonna get busted... I am. Seriously afraid, Stony.

Stony tries to give her a reassuring smile.

80

INT. DET. STRODE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

80

Going through the footage once again, Strode stops on a picture of Stony. Even with the bandanna on she's recognizable. The way she walks, moves. He pauses the footage. Stares at the screen.

81

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

81

Det. Strode is talking to his superior, CAPTAIN FREDRICKS, a heavyset, Willie Williams type.

DET. STRODE

I know... look. I was called in because a woman was shot. Then during the arrest, a young man was killed --

FREDRICKS

I know. Stevie Newkirk. We still gettin' bad press fo' that...

DET. STRODE

I'd like to bring in the sister. I think she might be one of the All Girl Posse.

FREDRICKS

What do ya have?

DET. STRODE

Well... nothing. She's tight with this girl Frankie Sutton who used to work at a bank... otherwise she's clean... I'd like to get a Ramsey...

FREDRICKS

First we kill her straight-A student brother? An' now we're gonna bring her in for a line-up based on someone she's friends with who knows about banks?

Det. Strode looks away.

FREDRICKS (CONTD)

We're not gonna hear the end of shit for that... no way.

82

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

82

Stony removes a ceiling grate from the utility closet. Carefully she pushes a pillowcase full of cash into the crawlspace and restores the grate. Cleo removes the knob and lock to the utility closet door and replaces it with one of their own.

83

INT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

83

Stony walks in. Everything is still as she left it, with Stevie's stuff all over the place. She picks up a hat of his. Holds it. Starts to cry.

84

EXT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

84

Det. Strode watches her from his car.

85

INT. OFFICE BUILDING RESTROOM - DAY

85

Stony is adding rolls of toilet paper to a bathroom.

LUTHER

Stony, you in here?

STONY

What's zup! Luther?

Luther comes to the stall, follows her, menacingly, as she moves from stall to stall loading toilet paper.

LUTHER

Where the hell is Cleo and Frankie? I'm two short... tell them heifers they fired... I need peoples who come to work.

Stony just smiles; she doesn't know what he's talkin' about.

STONY

Maybe they both got the same flu?

86

EXT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - DAY

86

In SLO MO, we SEE a brilliant spray of water from a hose, sparkling, then it subsides and we SEE Cleo, a grin from ear to ear, washing her car, buffing it like a secret lover. She's totally tricked it out with new paint, chrome, etc. Ursula stands at her side, lovingly handing her the waxing equipment as she needs it.

87

INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (TWO HOURS LATER)

87

Stony and Tisean ENTER, tired from working all day. Ursula is dancing on the table for Cleo. She's dressed up in brand-new sexy lingerie. A lit joint dangles from her lips.

Cleo moves to the table, rubs Ursula's smooth thighs.

TISEAN

How come ya'll didn't come to work?

CLEO

'Cause look what I got here!

Cleo points to Ursula.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I bought my baby new things... check 'em out.

Ursula does a little spin.

TISEAN

Luther said y'all's fired.

STONY

Cleo... we got to act like nothin's different.

STONY (CONT'D)

You need to get yo' ass to Luther's an' get yo' job back.

CLEO

... Luther can kiss my ashy kneecap... it's hard thinking about mopping floors when we got all that cash sitting up in there.

Frankie, quietly poring over something, pipes up.

FRANKIE

Yeah? An' that money's gonna last you a good WEEK at this rate. Then what you gonna do?

CLEO

Rob another goddamn bank. What the FUCK you think?

STONY

Hold up... we said ONCE. To get enough change to get us outta this place. We did, now it's over. We out. Quit while you're ahead.

FRANKIE

So you want your chump change... buy some chronic and some forties ... some shoes at Nordstrom's and next week be the same po' ho' you was last week.

STONY (to Frankie)

You know everything about this. You and Cleo go hit the next bank, if you all that.

CLEO

Fuck you.

Cleo puts her gun in Stony's face. Everyone tenses up.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I know you ain't gonna back down now when we need ya. I wants more money.

STONY

You're high and acting foolish but if you don't get that gun out my face...

Cleo languidly lowers the gun. Stony grabs a beer bottle and swats her across the cheek. A thin line of blood flows from Cleo's lip. Cleo brandishes the gun but Stony isn't intimidated.

STONY (CONT'D)

Don't ever raise a gun to me again.

88

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - NEXT NIGHT

88

Stony ENTERS the maintenance closet. With a power drill she unscrews the ceiling grate, reaches into the crawlspace for the loot.

89

INT. FRANKIE' '86 TOYOTA TERCEL - MOVING - NIGHT

89

Stony places a paper bag full of money in Frankie's lap. Frankie begins to count the money. Cleo gives Stony the evil eye from the rearview mirror.

CLEO

... you was wrong to cut me, Stony.

TISEAN

Girl, it's just a scratch.

CLEO

We go back to the first grade, you was my peeps for twenty years...

Cleo pulls to the curb. Tiscan and Stony climb out of the back seat.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I'll never forget this, Stony. Every time I see this scar, I'm thinking of you, bitch... homeys no more.

90

EXT. DOWNTOWN OAKLAND STREET - DAY

90

Cleo and Frankie are sitting in the Impala casing the Peninsula Bank on the other side of the street.

CLEO

We could take this bank, Frankie.

FRANKIE

Not without Stony and Tisean.

CLEO

Fuck them!! Fuck Stony! I say we jus' go in an' --

FRANKIE

'Cause you just a loud mouth...

CLEO

Naw!!! Let's do it!

91

INT. PENINSULA BANK - DAY

91

Inside, Frankie checks out the whole set-up while pretending to fill out a deposit slip.

92

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

92

Frankie CROSSES to the car, climbs in.

CLEO

What do you think?

FRANKIE

We need Stony and Tisean... bank's too big. Cameras, long lines, security guards.

CLEO

Yeah, well they out... let's forget about it, it would be just the two of us.

FRANKIE

Stony and Tisean'll be broke again in a week or two and they'll be back.

93

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

93

IN THE WINDOW we SEE Cleo and Frankie pull up in the Impala, sunglasses, new clothes, cold lampin'. Tisean laughs.

CLEO

How you like us now? Get in.

Cleo takes pff down the avenue, SOUNDTRACK MUSIC pumping, heads bobbing.

TISEAN

Stony's gonna get real salty when she peeps this ride...

CLEO

Stony can kiss my toe. She ain't the boss of us.

Frankie puts a pair of sunglasses on Tisean so alla' them are lookin' cool.

94

EXT. GHETTO STREET - DAY

94

Now Cleo is driving, pulls to the red light. THREE GUYS in a low-rider are in the next lane checking them out. Tisean winks at one of the guys.

GUY #1

Hey sweetness, pull over...

CLEO

For what?

GUY #1

I wasn't talkin' to you...

CLEO

I'm driving...

GUY #2

Pull over just a minute.

Both cars park. The Guys approach.

GUY #1

Yo, Yo, what up?

FRANKIE

Where y'all from?

GUY #1

I'm from Oaktown, but they visiting from New York...

TISEAN

What part of New York?

GUY #2

Mount Vernon...

CLEO

Country-ass shit.

GUY #2

Mount Vernon is next to the Bronx, it ain't even country... Oakland is some country-ass shit ... Jheri-curl fools.

Guy #2 steps off on Cleo; his cousin intervenes. Cleo REVEALS some gun metal.

CLEO

Nigga pleasssssee, before I drop yo' ass in Belize...

GUY #2

Frisco dyke...

GUY #1

Shut up... look, chill. Regulate. Why we going through all this? Apologize. (to the girls) We just wanted to meet y'all.

GUY #2

We's just kicking it...

GUY #2 (CONT'D)

We was gonna go over to the MacArthur and peep that new Wesley Snipes flick, why don't y'all bust a move with us?

CLEO

I'm down wit' dat...

FRANKIE

You buying?

GUY #2

I'm buying everybody in here something.

FRANKIE

Some other time, fella.

GUY #1

Don't stroll out on us... gimme that phone number.

DISSOLVE TO:

95

INT. IMPALA - MOVING - DAY (MINUTES LATER)

95

CLEO (to Tisean)

Yo, so what's my girl doing? You gonna come back in? I know you gotta step to that JUDGE and prove you got coins inna bank!

Tisean shrugs. Cleo blows her horn at a motorist who fails to proceed at the green light.

The motorist gives Cleo the finger from his rearview mirror. Cleo gives him the finger back. The motorist menacingly waves a .38 in the rearview mirror for their benefit.

Cleo and Frankie brandish their guns... Cleo cocks a 9mm.

MOTORIST'S P.O.V.

Two guns aimed at his head. The motorist speeds away fearfully. Cleo -- leaning out the car door, arms dangling in a rapper's pose, 9mm in hand:

CLEO

You better RECOGNIZE! Better ask somebody!

Cleo, Tisean and Frankie laugh their heads off.

96

INT. BAR - EARLY EVENING

96

Stony ENTERS, sees Cleo at the bar. Only one other patron in the place. Stony eases into a barstool next to Cleo. Acts as if this meeting is per chance -- it's not.

STONY

Rushon, gimme a Miller Lite.

She looks over at Cleo.

STONY (CONT'D)

Come on, girl. I'm sorry. You're sorry. We gotta put it behind us.

Cleo hesitates. Then quietly nods.

CLEO

Apology accepted. (a beat) What's a gun-slinging, bank-robbin' gangsta bitch doing drinking lite beer? (loudly) Rushon, get her some Jack Daniels up in here.

Beats...

CLEO (CONT'D)

You and Tisean should come back in. You don't have enough money to get outta Oaktown.

Stony nods.

STONY

I know... I know...

CLEO

You can go on to suburbia and start a new life. I KNOW that's what you wanna do. But we ain't nothing but hood rats; I can live wit' dat, you can't. These are my peeps, this is where I belong. What I'm gonna do in Marin County? Or Hollywood or some such shit? Oaktown is a state of mind; you can go a thousand miles away but you'll always be a hood rat... 'cause that's just your flow. An' I don' care if I die tryin' to get a piece of MINE.

STONY

That may be true but I ain't gonna roll over and accept it. I'm a ghost here, Cleo. Everywhere's is ghosts... jus' floatin' around. We lost our souls here. Aren't you tired of living like this?

Stony moves to the exit.

CLEO (solemnly)

Exactly. An' thas' why I say, you need to get back in. But face it, Stony, what we are started the minute we was born poor, black and female. Stony, ain't no bank job gonna change that.

97

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

97

Strode and two other surveillance guys take pictures from the window of an unmarked car as Cleo and Stony leave.

P.O.V. - PICTURE

CLOSE IN on Cleo.

98

INT. DET. STRODE'S OFFICE - DAY

98

OFF PICTURE of Cleo, to Strode, going through files.

DET. STRODE

Here we go. Bingo. Grand theft auto.

99

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE BUILDING - NEXT NIGHT

99

Tisean and Stony are working with another crew. Cleo and Frankie come waltzing into the corridor. Tisean nudges Stony, gestures toward Cleo's entry.

LUTHER

Cleo, I know you didn't come here to work. Haven't been to work in ten days... don't call nobody.

CLEO

I'm broke, Luther. I know you gonna gimme my old job back 'cause nobody takes shit the way I take shit. Now shut up before I put this mop handle up your ass, Luther.

100

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE BOARD ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

100

Tisean, Frankie and Stony have completed their janitorial duties. Stony is putting the buffer away, Tisean is loading an industrial-sized bucket into the utility closet.

Cleo is polishing a large table in the very plush corporate conference room. Frankie ENTERS.

Frankie sits at the head of the table. Tisean and Stony ENTER furtively, take seats at the large, finely-crafted mahogany table. Frankie begins to talk in a Brando-esque imitation of Don Corleone. Cleo and Stony eye one another cautiously.

FRANKIE (putting toilet paper in her jaw for effect)
There has been a rift in this family that is not good for business.

Tisean laughs at the flawless imitation.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
See, we gonna play it like Stony says. Back to work. See? If only she and Tisean will come rob de bank wit' us. We started as a gang of four... we must always be four. Don Stony from da Bronx, what is your opinion, should we all take this bank?

STONY
If I call the shots, we do this thing ONE more time. Jus' so's we have enough to stroll outta here. Do you agree, Tisean?

TISEAN
That's right...

FRANKIE (still mimicking Brando, to Cleo)
Clemenza, can you live with the terms that your Don has set forth?

Cleo studies Stony.

STONY
They'll be no fancy cars.

TISEAN
No... no... underwear for Ursula...

STONY
No shopping sprees that will attract attention. Cleo, can you respect our condition?

CLEO (playing along)
Yes, Godfather.

STONY
Tisean Scullino... are you cool with all this?

TISEAN
I am, Don.

STONY
And you, Frankie Costello, from the Chicago mob, do you accept your Godfather's terms?

Frankie nods her consent.

STONY (CONT'D)

(holds up her hands like the Pope) Show me love.

Cleo reaches across the large table to Stony; they hold hands.

FRANKIE

The All Girl Posse is back in full effect. Next stop... Peninsula Bank.

101

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

101

Stony and Keith are frantically working joysticks to a video game. The screen is NOT SEEN, only the annoying COMPUTERIZED SOUND EFFECT. Game over. Stony wins.

KEITH

Wow, I just can't beat you.

STONY

I got it like that.

He leans over, begins to kiss her rather passionately. But something is keeping Stony back. Keith stares at her.

KEITH

I'm... what? I'm not "down" enough?

Stony smiles.

STONY

Nah. You just fine, Keith. I jus' got a lot on mah mind.

She smiles.

KEITH

You wanna talk about it?

She does. She almost wants to tell him.

STONY

I just... I got to do something I don't really want to... I mean... I know it's not right.

He studies her.

KEITH

Don't do it. You got too much dignity, girl. Don't never compromise dignity.

Stony looks at him long and hard. Deep in her, she knows he's right. But there's no getting out NOW.

102

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DOWNTOWN OAKLAND - DAY

102

Tisean, Stony and Frankie sit in Cleo's car watching her attempt to hot-wire a Cadillac.

FRANKIE

What's taking so long?

Finally we HEAR the ENGINE PURR. Cleo ducks down, cassette tapes and CDs go flying out the window.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Damn, girl. Why you gotta litter and shit?

Cleo sneers. Puts in a hip-hop TAPE, loud. They all smile.

103

EXT. PENINSULA BANK - OAKLAND - DAY

103

Frankie is driving the Cadillac, pulls in front of the Peninsula Bank, watches as Tisean and Cleo ENTER. In the b.g., we SEE a Brinks truck pull up. The bank has a large lobby, surrounded by 20-foot-high glass windows.

Frankie watches as Cleo moves forward in the teller line. Tisean takes a place in the line a couple of people behind Cleo. Stony ENTERS the bank. A deranged homeless man is assaulting pedestrians passing by the bank. Beats later a motorcycle cop pulls up -- the cop attempts to restrain the homeless man.

104

INT. PENINSULA BANK - DAY

104

Cleo passes the "hold-up" note to the teller. Tisean pretends to be someone in line. The teller reacts nervously but quietly complies -- begins to place stacks of bills into a coin bag. Stony is covering. Everyone gets on the ground, including Tisean.

BACK TO THE STREET

A black-and-white has arrived to assist in the arrest of the homeless man. The B&W is blocking in Frankie's car. From inside the bank Stony sees the predicament. The homeless man becomes agitated; the two cops are unable to restrain and cuff him.

BEHIND THE BANK

The Brinks truck is opening its doors. The Brinks truck is opening its doors. The Brinks guards step out.

BACK IN FRONT

Frankie begins to sweat it. The B&W is so close to her car she has to exit from the passenger door -- climbs out of the Caddy -- walks into an alley abutting the bank.

BACK TO THE BANK

The robbers are trapped inside the bank by the ongoing police activity.

CLEO (venomous whisper)

You just be Kool and the Gang, you hear me? If that silent alarm goes, my first bullet's got your name on it... (reads the teller's name tag) ... Laurie.

Stony moves slowly to the exit until she sees the B&W and now two motorcycle units. She freezes. Cleo points her gun at the teller, then at the people on the ground. A man moans. Tisean, hands over her head, starts screaming, getting into her part a little too much. Cleo shoots her a dirty look.

CLOSE - AN UNDERCOVER COP

lying on the floor face-down with the other customers. He eases his hand into the front of his pants, removes a .357 Python. He's about to take aim, when something stops him, a feeling. He looks over, and there's Tisean, her gun pointed at his head.

CLEO (to man)

Thas' right, girl. Keep 'em in line.

Cleo empties the drawer, the three women quickly back out of the bank, heads swiveling like a middle linebacker turning to run at the last instant.

To make things worse the two Brinks employees are bringing in boxes of money on a dolly. One man pushes the dolly (DOLLY MAN), while another (GUNMAN) walks near him holding the largest pistol Stony has ever seen.

BACK TO THE ALLEY

The armored Brinks truck is parked in the alley. Frankie approaches the Brinks driver who is inattentively trying to scrape chewing gum from his shoe. Frankie lifts her bandanna -- puts the gat in his face. She takes his gun and tells him to run for it. She doesn't have to say it twice -- the driver hauls ass. Frankie climbs into the Brinks truck.

BACK TO THE BANK

Frankie SMASHES the Brinks TRUCK through the WINDOWS -- shards of GLASS SHATTER in all directions -- the truck tumbles over the slip counter. Customers scream and dart out of the path of the approaching truck. The Brinks gunman turns toward the truck, opens fire until Stony kicks the gun from his hand. The gunman thinks Stony's about to shoot him. Their eyes lock onto one another.

Cleo and Tisean jump into the rear compartment of the truck; Stony leaps into the shotgun seat.

105

EXT. BANK - DAY

105

The cops in front of the bank hear the GUNFIRE, react in confusion.

106

INT. BANK - DAY

106

Frankie rams the truck through the teller counter, over desks, through file cabinets and out the rear doorway of the bank. They escape through the alley.

107

EXT. VAN NESS STREET - OAKLAND - DAY (TWO MINUTES LATER) 115 107

The Brinks truck is stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic. The B&W and motorcycle cops race up to the truck. Four uniformed cops cautiously approach, guns drawn. The cops move in closer, they inch up to the truck, then -- in unison -- rush the armored car, yelling, shouting commands -- they fling open the doors -- the cab is empty -- the cops pop open the rear -- all the money is gone and so are the girls.

108

EXT. BART STATION - OAKLAND - DAY (FIVE MINUTES LATER) 108

Tisean and Stony EXIT the station, talking, high spirits.

CLEO

...I thought we was OVER... with the cops right outside the bank. Gots to give Frankie her props... that was quick thinking.

STONY

If we'd stayed in that Brinks truck a minute longer they'd been in our ass good. The sensor would've let them know everywhere we was. Where you going?

TISEAN

I'll meet you at Cleo's... I got to see my baby.

STONY

It's gonna be okay, Tisean.

TISEAN (whispers)

And what if they ask me how I got the money?

STONY

You tell 'em an old friend hooked you up.

TISEAN (quietly)

I'll be in court.

STONY

You'll be fine. You can lie for your baby.

TISEAN (determined)

Yeah... you right.

Stony goes over to a pay phone. Dials Keith's number.

STONY (into phone)
Keith? Hi, baby. Yeah, I'm okay. I'm just... I'm
hangin' with the girls tonight... yeah, it WAS a hard
day o' work.

109 INT. PENINSULA BANK - DAY

109

Donner is getting info from the robbery and investigative units when
Strode comes in.

DET. STRODE

The girls?

DONNER

Goddamn fuckin' bitches took off in a Brinks truck!

Strode shakes his head.

DONNER (CONT'D)

Apparently... the getaway car was blocked in. It's
still out there. Car theft report is from West Twenty-
First Street garage.

Strode nods, rubbing his forehead.

DET. STRODE

Damn. They're getting in deeper than they know.

110 INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

110

Strode is standing in the empty parking space. Scattered at his feet
are the CD's and tapes Cleo threw out the window.

111 INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - DAY

111

Tisean waits in a waiting room to see her baby. A WOMAN finally
brings him out. Tisean bursts into tears, hugging and crying over
him. The Woman waits patiently, and takes Jajuan from her. Tisean
holds onto him.

TISEAN

Please... please lemme jus' take him. I got money
now...

WOMAN

You'll have to tell that to the judge in court...

Tisean tries to pull herself together as she waves goodbye.

112 INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - DAY

112

The foursome gives quiet high-fives to one another. The floor is
stacked with pre-packaged money from the Brinks truck.

CLEO

Counting money is harder than working for Luther.

CLEO (CONT'D)

This is getting me dizzy.

FRANKIE

Two hundred, ninety-six thousand, Stony... and counting.

They sit down on the beanbag furniture.

STONY

That's about seventy-five thousand apiece. We chill for a week or two, we scrub floors for Luther just like we always been doing, nothing has changed... then we divide up the loot -- go our separate ways.

The enormity of the moment weighs in their expressions.

TISEAN

... I'm going to miss y'all.

They embrace one another.

113

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - UTILITY CLOSET - DAY (LATER)

113

Cleo undoes the ceiling grate; Stony and Tisean hand her pillowcases filled with loot. Frankie stands as a lookout.

114

INT. BASIC BLACK BAR - NIGHT

114

Frankie and Cleo are drinking beer and playing video games (video screen NOT SHOWN). Stony ENTERS the bar. Waves casually to Frankie but keeps her distance. She orders a beer, moves over to the corner of the bar.

115

INT. TISEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

115

Tisean sits quietly in the dark studying Jajuan's empty crib.

116

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

116

Keith opens the door. Stony is leaning against the wall, tired. He takes her into his arms. They kiss.

They begin making love right against the wall. Hungry for one another.

DISSOLVE TO:

117

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

117

Keith and Stony are lying calmly in one another's embrace in his bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

118

INT. KEITH'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

118

Keith is knotting his necktie while talking on the phone. Stony nurses a cup of tea, reads the paper.

KEITH

Stony, I'm substituting for my boss at a dinner for the National Association of Bankers... tomorrow night at the Saint Francis... I need a date...

Excited but not showing it:

STONY

Yeah, why not?... sure.

He kisses her.

KEITH

Be here early, like six. I don't know when the limo is coming...

STONY

Limo?

Keith kisses her; races out the door.

KEITH

Yeah, limo... black tie... six.

119

INT. GHETTO DRESS BOUTIQUE - DAY

119

Frankie, Tisean and Cleo are sitting impatiently in the boutique waiting for Stony to come out of the dressing room. She APPEARS...

STONY

How's this one?

CLEO

Fine-I-love-it, buy-the-shit and let's go...

FRANKIE

I thought we said no spending.

STONY

I think it's too loud... this is uppity white folks we talkin' about...

TISEAN

It's sexy... but it's got a high "ho" factor" on it.

STONY

You think so? What about the red one?

Cleo starts to numbingly bang her head on the wall.

CLEO

Why you goin' out wit' dis fool anyhow? We done robbed a bank, you don't need yo' "man on the inside" anymore.

TISEAN

You seen him? He's fine!

FRANKIE

You movin' outta the hood anyway.

Stony looks at herself in the mirror.

STONY

Exactly.

120

INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

120

Stony is getting dressed when there's a KNOCK at the DOOR. She CROSSES to open the door, checking the peephole first.

HER P.O.V. - THROUGH PEEPHOLE

TWO uniformed OFFICERS.

BACK TO SCENE

Stony leans against the wall, takes a deep breath. Opens the door to the extent the chain will allow. Swallows the lump in her throat.

STONY

Y-y-yes?

COP

Ma'am, we're about to tow three abandoned cars from this lot. You own any of these vehicles?

He pushes a computer listing through the door.

STONY

We don't own a car, Officer.

COP

Thank you.

Stony closes the door slowly.

121

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

121

She knocks at the door; he answers but is talking on a cordless phone. He ends his conversation and gives her a kiss. Looks at her dress -- some lime-green polyester atrocity.

STONY
Is this okay?

KEITH (unconvincing)
Yeah, I love it.

STONY
You don't like it?

KEITH
It's great, really...

STONY
It doesn't go with your tux?

KEITH
We're late.

122

EXT. LIMO - NIGHT

122

A black limousine waits at the curb. Keith and Stony climb into the rear as the chauffeur closes the door behind them.

KEITH (checking the bar)
Nice, huh?

STONY
Real nice. Bar, crystal.

KEITH
We've been hanging out for a couple weeks now. It's nice... we've been very honest and straight-up with one another. I've only told you one lie.

STONY
Oh. What have you lied about?

Pregnant pause.

KEITH
... I hate this dress...

They laugh.

123

EXT./INT. ARMANI BOUTIQUE - NIGHT

123

Keith goes straight to a snazzy gown draped over a hanger. Shows the dress to Stony. "You like?"

She smiles.

KEITH (to the clerk; flashing that platinum AE) Hook us up... we steppin' out tonight and we got to come correct.

Stony shakes her head at yet another lame attempt by Keith at street slang.

124 EXT./INT. LIMO - OUTSIDE ST. FRANCIS HOTEL - NIGHT 124

Limo pulls up. Stony moves to open the door. Keith smacks her hand playfully -- points to the chauffeur. They wait for the chauffeur to open the door. Keith exits first. When he sees her standing before him, radiant, he is smitten, rendered speechless by her beauty.

125 EXT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 125

Det. Strode stands at the door, waiting. He knocks. Rings. Nothing. Then quietly, he jimmies the lock and lets himself in.

126 INT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 126

The place reeks of grieving and loss. Flowers from the funeral, now wilted, haven't been removed. Strode opens the door to Stevie's bedroom. Everything is exactly as he left it. Strode is moved, wipes the sweat from his brow. Sorry, remorseful. He closes the door. Looks around. In the living room he sees a picture framed in plastic: It's the four girls as teens -- Cleo, Frankie, Stony and Tisean -- looking very much themselves. Strode stares at the photo. There is no longer any doubt in his mind. He leaves the apartment.

127 EXT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 127

Outside, Strode pulls out one of his cards.

INSERT - THE CARD

as he writes: "STONY. THIS IS ALL GOING TO END VERY BADLY. TURN YOURSELF IN AND WE'LL WORK SOMETHING OUT."

BACK TO SCENE

He tacks the card on her door.

128 INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT 128

A rather opulent dining room, perhaps twenty couples dressed elegantly in black tie -- Keith wades into the crowd to mingle with Stony in tow. He hands a crystal champagne flute and she downs it in one sip, to his amazement.

KEITH

Are you nervous?

She smiles nervously.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Don't be... you're a diamond in a room full of cut glass. You're the most beautiful woman here, you're the most beautiful woman wherever you may wander. Don't ever forget that.

His words fill her immediately with confidence. A colleague of Keith, NIGEL, approaches with his wife, PATRICE -- Ivy League yuppie types.

NIGEL

Keith, hey, over here.

KEITH

Hey Nigel.

NIGEL

Where's your place card?

KEITH

We're next to you...

NIGEL

Good, I didn't want to have to make clever banter with Rossman all night long... (to Stony) Hello, I'm Nigel. I taught Keith everything he knows about corporate banking. This is my wife, Patrice.

KEITH

This is my date, Stony Newkirk.

They AD-LIB hellos.

NIGEL

There are some heavy-hitters here: Michigawa from Sanwa...

KEITH

Strolman from Citibank...

Patrice and Stony roll their eyes at the bank talk.

NIGEL

If a terrorist were to blow this banquet room up, the banking systems of Europe, Japan and the U.S. would never recover...

PATRICE

Gee, I'd think a bunch of dead bankers would make the world a better place...

Stony and Patrice laugh -- Nigel and Keith scowl at her misplaced humor.

NIGEL
Stony, are you in banking, too?

STONY
... in a way...

Keith smiles quizzically.

PATRICE
Wells Fargo, Interstate? Chemical?

A beat.

STONY
I prefer to create my own, personalized portfolio of investments that reflect an original and... diverse taste in... funding...

They all stare at her, impressed. Especially Keith.

Stony grabs a crystal champagne flute from a passing waiter. Downs it.

SAME - LATER

The bankers are having dessert with cognac and cigars. Through the crowd Stony stares at Keith chatting up his colleagues, drawing on a Cuban cigar. An older BANK OFFICER approaches Stony.

BANK OFFICER
Young lady, you are a very pretty and vivacious woman and that is a lovely gown.

STONY
Thank you, you're a very charming gentleman.

BANK OFFICER
Where'd you go to school?

STONY
Woodson High.

BANK OFFICER
I meant university, child.

Stony is confident now.

STONY
Harvard B. School?

BANK OFFICER
Take my card, fax your resumé to my office... tomorrow. I've got something in mergers and acquisitions.

Stony finds Keith smiling at her through the crowd. He gestures for her to rendezvous with him on the o.s. terrace. He makes some plausible excuse to leave the men he is talking shop with.

129 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT (ONE HOUR LATER) 129

Keith climbs into the limo behind Stony. The limo takes off.

130 INT. LIMO - MOVING - NIGHT 130

He kisses her gently. The dainty strap from the Armani peels off her shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO:

131 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT 131

Keith and Stony are walking in the gentle, moon-lit tide. The chauffeur is skipping stones into the sea. The limo is parked on an old abandoned pier jutting into the waves.

In the b.g. the headlights from the Golden Gate Bridge twinkle like stars in a distant galaxy.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME - LATER

Stony and Keith drinking champagne, lying on the hood of the limo, backs against the windshield, staring off into the heavens.

STONY

... this is one of the best nights of my life...

KEITH

Sitting here on this limo... with the Golden Gate looming over us... Do you feel like you're caged now?

STONY

No. 'Cause I'm borrowing from yo' life.

KEITH

Maybe you should be with me more often.

Stony is touched but hesitant.

STONY

You hang out with these people who all OWN a bank. Where I come from, you lucky to have an account.

She shakes her head.

STONY (CONT'D)

I just... I wanta get outta here.

KEITH

Oh. (beats of silence) Stony, you don't have to go away to find yourself. We can find one another here, right now. I like the way I feel when I'm around you.

132 EXT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 132

Keith drops Stony off at Cleo's in his own car. Strode is waiting as Keith drops Stony off. He runs the plates.

STRODE (into radio)

IF673B... Keith Weston. No priors? Nothing. Hmm...

He writes the name down on a pad.

133 EXT. STONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 133

The card that Strode placed on Stony's door comes loose; flutters to the floor, where it falls through a crack in the floorboards.

134 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY 134

The girls show up for work only to find another MAN in Luther's truck and uniform. He holds out his hand.

PETE

Pete Rodney. I'm takin' over for Luther. Jus' for a bit.

TISEAN

He's... he's not here?

CLEO

Where is his ugly ass?

PETE

On vacation.

The girls look at each other, suddenly nervous.

135 INT OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT 135

Frankie checks the hallway to ensure that the coast is clear. Cleo unlocks the utility closet and Frankie begins drilling the screws to open the ceiling grate.

136 INT. CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT 136

FROM INSIDE, we SEE Frankie's head pop in; then Stony next to her. They look left, right. Nothing. The pillowcases are missing. They check in the other direction; follow the flashlight's beam through the duct work -- no money.

137

INT. BASIC BLACK BAR - NIGHT

137

The bar's crowded, loud MUSIC, plenty of trash being talked. Cleo is going through selections at the juke box. Frankie is in a heated conversation with a gangsta-looking guy. She motions for the girls to come over.

FRANKIE (quiet)

That fuckin' Luther. He's holed up inna goddamn hotel with some ho'.

She waves a piece of paper. It's the hotel address.

138

EXT./INT. IMPALA - MOVING - NIGHT

138

The Impala races by. Silence. Frankie starts to laugh, crazed, in agonizing disgust.

FRANKIE

Right back where we started from. Broke. Born losers-- we ain't never getting out.

TISEAN (banging dashboard)

Damn.

CLEO

Luther's gonna get dealt with 'cause I ain't going out like this.

TISEAN

Whaddaya mean?... I don' wanna get --

CLEO

He's gonna get "fucked with" tonight.

FRANKIE

Word.

Tisean looks back and forth at her friends' angry faces.

139

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

139

A man and woman, silhouetted in shadows. We HEAR amorous SIGHs and MOANS of passion. Luther is screwing the woman, hard, almost violently.

CLOSE - HI-TECH TV REMOTE CONTROL DEVICE

lying on the carpet. Cleo's hand ENTERS the FRAME, picks up the remote.

The passionate moaning of the woman crescendos as she reaches orgasm. All around, signs of the girls' spent money: Cristal champagne, silk pajamas, etc.

Cleo takes the remote, moves out of the dark shadow that veils her -- slaps the remote across Luther's face.

He turns, excited, dazed.

CLEO

Climb out the pussy for a minute, Luther.

We SEE his face, square-jawed. Comfortable with money.

LUTHER

Bitch, you better be here for a good goddamn reason.

CLEO (gun in his face)

My money is a good goddamn reason.

Luther eases to one side of the bed. A .32 lies temptingly on the night table. Cleo plays cat-and-mouse, lets him move within reach of the gun. He dashes for it, but Frankie grinds her heel into his hand and racks her 9mm at his temple.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Punk-ass bitch, we want our money...

LUTHER

... Suck my dick. It's gone.

Frankie fires. The bullet grazes his skin, plows into the headboard. The force of the bullet rolls him off the bed where he sits, naked but unfazed. His GIRLFRIEND cries out, shaken by the NOISE of the GUN BLAST so close to her own head.

CLEO

Gonna ask you one more time -- just one more time.
Where's my money?

LUTHER (fearlessly arrogant, smiles through blood-stained teeth) Just smoke me 'cause you ain't getting the money.

Luther gathers the throw rug in his powerful hand and at the precise moment yanks the rug -- flipping Cleo to the floor. Her gun leaves her hand, spinning like a top.

He springs like a coiled leopard -- grabs the fallen pistol. From behind him, a SHOT is FIRED. It stops him like a train. He sinks to the ground, REVEALING Tiscan, hands shaking, the gun smokin'. Blood seeps slowly from the wound. His Girlfriend screams voicelessly. Tiscan is shaking badly. Frankie comes over, takes the gun outta her hand. Cleo goes over to the Girlfriend's purse. Pulls out her wallet. She takes the driver's license out.

CLEO

Allisa Lyons. Four-Eight-Three Sixty-Sixth Avenue.
You didn't see any of this, right?

She wipes her tears away -- nods agreement as Cleo tucks the license in her shirt pocket; smiles to the girl.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Insurance, baby.

FRANKIE

Where did Luther hide the money?

GIRLFRIEND

I swear I don't know... I swear. I only known him a couple days...

The girls look at each other, disgusted.

140

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

140

Keith and Stony are eating Chinese carry-out, his eyes glued to some PBS-TV discussion pertaining to interest rates and the Japanese yen. She opens her fortune cookie.

STONY

If you didn't live in Oakland, where would you go?

KEITH

I don't know... heard Santa Fe was nice.

STONY

Santa Fe. Hmm... Whas' up there?

KEITH

Lots of space. Interesting people.

STONY

Can you see me there?

Keith puts his food down. Something about her tone clues him in. She's really gonna leave.

KEITH

Yeah. I can see you anywhere. But mostly I can see you with me.

Stony looks away. She doesn't want to have to feel this much for anyone. She quietly opens her fortune cookie.

INSERT - FORTUNE COOKIE

It reads: "CHERISH THE LOVE OF A GOOD FRIEND."

141

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

141

The noisy ELEVATOR CRANKING its way to the third floor. The DOOR SQUEAKS open. Stony looks back down the corridor to Keith, standing at his door. He studies her. She looks at him. Blows him a kiss. Like nothing's wrong.

142

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

142

Pete nervously directs the girls. Stony is pushing a mop.

PETE

Girls... I have some bad news... Luther was killed last night... no good reason. I'm... I'm sorry to be the one to tell you.

The girls nod, like they feel bad. Pete leaves with supplies for the truck. Stony reads their expressions.

FRANKIE (quietly)

Luther wouldn't give back the money. There was a scuffle, we had to do him.

Stony punches the wall. The anger boils up in her.

FRANKIE

They gonna be on Cleo and me. We gonna take down that big bank downtown. Are you in?

STONY

No.

FRANKIE

Thought we was gonna heist enough to go somewhere and "get a new life."

STONY

Now it's armed robbery and murder. We said we weren't gonna hurt anyone!!!

There's a long silence. Tisean looks at Stony, pleading.

TISEAN

I got to get money befo' my court date. I... I... have to... Stony, please? We can't do it without you.

143

INT. BAR - NIGHT

143

Cleo is having a beer at the bar. The place is basically empty. Det. Strode is nursing a drink at the bar. He leaves his stool and sits next to Cleo.

CLEO (WITHOUT EVER LOOKING at the man) I'm not trying to hear any shit tonight.

DET. STRODE

So which one of the All Girl Posse whacked Luther, huh? I'd guess it was you since you're the only one with a record, Cleo.

Now Cleo smells a cop.

CLEO
Don' know what the FUCK you's talkin' about.

DET. STRODE
I'll tell you what I'm talkin' about. We need to ride over to the Seventh... talk a few things over.

CLEO
You can't take me in... you don't even have probably cause for shit --

DET. STRODE
I'm just having you participate in a line-up, Cleo. And by the way, having a witness is a fuck of a lot better than probable cause.

Cleo follows him reluctantly.

144 EXT. BAR - EVENING (6 P.M.) 144

Det. Strode escorts Cleo into an unmarked car.

145 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT 145

Stony is working very hard, scrubbing a floor. Stony wipes her brow -- goes out to the loading dock for some fresh air. The others follow her, wordless. They stare at her blankly, vacantly. Stony lights a cigarette. Then suddenly stomps it out.

STONY
Fuck this... let's go.

146 EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT 146

They follow her out. Climb into the Impala.

147 INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT 147

Hustle and bustle of uniformed officers moving to and fro. Collars being hauled, PHONES RINGING, typewriters churning out police reports.

148 INT. DET STRODE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 148

Cleo is led down a hallway of holding cells. Criminals of all kinds wait.

DET. STRODE
Pick four ladies who look like you.

CLEO
Wha'?

DET. STRODE
We're doin' a line-up, remember?

CLEO
I don't think anyone here has mah dis-tinct-ive good
looks, know what I'm sayin'?... I can be a fine
motherfuckah when I want to.

Strode shakes his head in disgust, motions to a couple of heavyset African-American women. Leads them all down a hallway with the help of the guards.

149

INT. LINE-UP ROOM - NIGHT

149.

As she walks in, she catches sight of a cop escorting Luther's Girlfriend into a room. Cleo's heart skips a beat. She's trying to keep her cool, play this chess game. She gets in line, looks directly into the mirror.

OTHER SIDE OF MIRROR

Luther's Girlfriend is seated with Detective Jamison, who escorted her in.

LUTHER'S GIRLFRIEND
... you sure she can't see me? Looks like she's
looking right at me.

It does. Cleo is staring right at her, letting her know she knows she's there. Psychologically enervating the room.

JAMISON
Nah, just your imagination...

BACK TO THE GIRLFRIEND

JAMISON
... do you see the person who killed Luther?

BACK TO CLEO

who stares into the mirror, even though the rest of the line-up has taken a quarter-turn. She calculatedly taps her right shirt pocket, the place where she'd put the Girlfriend's driver's license.

BACK TO THE GIRLFRIEND

JAMISON
Do you see her? The woman that killed Luther?

LUTHER'S GIRLFRIEND
No, that's not her.

Jamison pushes her face almost into the glass.

JAMISON

Be sure now.

She shakes her head "no." Jamison is angry; frustrated.

150

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

150

Cleo sits at a table. Strode and Jamison are there, questioning her.

JAMISON

What about the bank jacks?... the so-called "All Girl Posse?" You know who they might be, Cleo?

Shakes her head. The lights dim; a video projector casts footage from the bank robbery.

JAMISON (CONT'D) (POINTING TO THE flickering image) The stout girl looks a lot like you, Cleo.

CLEO

Naw, that ho' ain't got my girlish figure.

Strode rolls his chair up close to Cleo, grabs a fistful of her hair -- yanks her neck back.

DET. STRODE

Get outta here, but remember, I'll be watching you. You fuck up just once and I'll be there to put my foot up your ass.

Cleo stands. Strode gestures for her to exit; she does.

151

EXT. STREET - PAY PHONE - NIGHT

151

Cleo is talking to Stony.

CLEO

(into phone) Frankie tell you I got picked up? They was all over me but I was representing.

STONY (V.O.)

... Are they tailing you?

CLEO (into phone)

Michael Jordan couldn't tail me.

STONY (V.O.)

Everybody's... meeting at "the school."

152

EXT. STREET - IMPALA - MOVING - NIGHT

152

All four of them in the car, driving away from the MLK Elementary.

153

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

153

Tiscan, Stony and Cleo ENTER with beer, chips, salsa. Frankie is flicking through cable channels. There's a heaviness in the air.

FRANKIE

They on our ass. We got to do two things: hit another bank and get out of town. I say we hit Pan-Pacific.

STONY

What about the bulletproof partitions?

FRANKIE

We can work around that. I'm tellin' you the big money's at that bank. We could give five hundred thousand.

CLEO

'Nuff said. We hittin' it -- simple as that. We hot, Frankie, we facing a murder rap.

STONY

Look... does it have to be Pan-Pacific Bank?

The girls stare at her.

CLEO

Fuck izzat? You g'wan get soft on us?

FRANKIE

Over an uptight, yuppie man?

Stony looks away. She hasn't even let herself acknowledge what she feels.

CLEO

If we're not out of town by this time tomorrow we'll probably be in County. They're two seconds off our ass.

154

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (ONE HOUR LATER)

154

To ease the tension the girls are drinking beers and harmonizing to some old soul classic on the RADIO.

155

EXT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - DAY

155

A bus passes by. Tiscan, Stony case the building to ensure that no police are watching the place. The coast is clear.

156

INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - DAY

156

A WOMAN comes out carrying Jajuan. Tiscan talks to her quietly.

WOMAN

I know your court date's tomorrow. Good luck, Tisean.

She smiles. Can barely tear herself away. She walks away and turns around, sees Jajuan watching her leave, resting but anxious in the arms of another woman. She walks away with her eyes peeled to him.

157

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY (ONE HOUR LATER)

157

The posse is gathered around a booth. Through the window in the b.g. is the Pan-Pacific Bank they plan to hit.

FRANKIE

Cleo and I sat here all day casing this bank. We can make more money hitting this bank than the other two jobs... combined.

They stop talking when the waitress appears to pour more water and coffee. The women are tense, edgy.

TISEAN

Cleo, you shouldn't drink so... much... so... I mean, it'll make me... nervous.

CLEO

Tisean, how's my drinking coffee gonna make you nervous?

TISEAN

It just does...

FRANKIE

Pay attention. Nobody has ever successfully robbed this joint.

CLEO

I wish you would stop saying that. Damn.

STONY

... because the nearest I-Eighty on ramp is a mile away.

CLEO

So what ya saying is we're four idiots for trying.

FRANKIE

No, what I'm saying is only we can do this... Now pay attention. We timed the traffic light at the intersection. After rush hour the lights open south on Market for sixty seconds, then east and west on Sansome for forty-five seconds. Every two minutes the light will close the intersection for pedestrian crossings... so we go into the bank, we have four minutes to work with, exit the bank and the traffic light will create a lull in the flow just long enough for us to flee. We take all the loot we can get in three minutes.

Cleo extends her hands to Stony and Frankie. Tisean grasps Stony and Frankie's hands. The waitress leaves the check.

CLEO

Somebody cover my share until I go rob this bank...

FRANKIE

I got the hotel, I'm broke.

STONY

Me, too...

TISEAN

We can't pay the breakfast bill...

FRANKIE

What we gonna do?

CLEO

Walk out, one by one...

Cleo slyly walks out of the restaurant.

Frankie follows and Tisean peels off. Stony gets up, moves inconspicuously to the exit. The waitress comes after her... shakes her head.

158

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

158

The posse drives by in the Impala. Stony pulls over. They case several cars, decide to hot-wire a Jeep Cherokee.

Cleo eases into the car with a locksmith's door opener. Stony circles and returns. Cleo's now in the Cherokee. Once again she rummages through the glove compartment looking for some music. Everything she doesn't like she tosses out the window.

159

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

159

Stony is alone in the Impala; parks it on a residential street. Beats later the others arrive in the stolen Jeep. Stony has her Armani gown in the trunk, fresh from the dry cleaner's.

CLEO (off the Armani gown)

You going dancing tonight, girl?

They smile at one another. Stony notices a flock of sparrows take flight from a bushy oak tree. She watches the sparrows dancing in the sky, making lazy circles. Free.

TISEAN

Get in, Stony.

160

INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - DAY

160

Conference room. Bank officials are gathered with Strode, Jamison and Donner to be briefed on the rash of robberies. Keith is among them. Donner clicks on a video projection system which shows clips from the girls' last robbery.

DONNER

They seem to know the inner workings of each bank.
Their M.O. is in-and-out...

An image of Stony, grabbing money, her gun pointed, bandanna on,
flickers ON THE SCREEN.

DET. STRODE

These women are also wanted for a vicious murder.

CLOSE - KEITH

his eyes wide open, an undeniable look of recognition in his eyes.

161

INT. GRAND CHEROKEE - DAY

161

The women are silent, meditative as the Cherokee heads downtown on Market. Stony dials a call on the car phone.

STONY (into phone)

Keith Weston... (she's placed on hold)

Cleo looks at her curiously.

162

INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - DAY

162

A BANK CLERK motions to Keith. Strode is right there.

CLERK

Phone, Mister Weston.

KEITH (into phone)

This is Keith...

STONY (V.O.)

Can you meet me at the coffee shop across the street
in ten minutes?

KEITH

(into phone) Sure.

Beads of sweat have gathered on his forehead. Strode goes on with his talk.

DET. STRODE

Apparently, they case each bank thoroughly, timing
lines and transactions. It's even possible that they
have contacts on the inside.

Baby? I... KEITH (into phone)

He wants to say something, tell her he knows.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(into phone) I'll be there. Yeah. I'm leaving right now.

As he hangs up the phone, lost in thought, Det. Strode puts his hand out, making ready to leave.

DET. STRODE
We're all done here.

Keith automatically gives Strode his card.

KEITH
Lemme show you out the back.

163 EXT. REAR OF BANK - DAY 163

He leads the detectives out of the bank. We can SEE the unmarked police van pull up and get them.

164 INT. BANK - DAY 164

Keith quickly runs through the bank to the front.

165 EXT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - DAY 165

The Cherokee circles the bank; Frankie is driving the getaway. The three women prepare to enter. Stony looks across the street to the coffee shop. Sees Keith ENTERING, panning the restaurant for her. They don't even notice the unmarked police van pass them. Stony ENTERS the bank.

166 INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - DAY 166

The women rush into the bank. Screaming, commanding, wielding their guns.

Stony and Tiscan move effortlessly from teller to teller -- pouring cash drawer after cash drawer into their bags.

A bold bank employee tries to activate the alarm. Stony locks in on her -- fires a shot, just missing the woman's hand.

STONY (through bandanna)
Mess around, all right!

The bank employee shivers from the close impact of Stony's bullet.

167

EXT. STREET - DAY

167

Frankie in the Cherokee, her eyes moving from the goings-on in the bank to what is happening on the street. She sees in her rearview mirror a TRAFFIC COP approaching. Keith waits patiently in the coffee shop.

CLOSE - A RED LIGHT TURNING GREEN

A "DON'T WALK" sign illuminated.

CLOSE - FRANKIE'S HAND

easing over the handle of her 9mm, buried in her waistband.

BACK TO SCENE

TRAFFIC COP

Hey, you're blocking traffic... no parking here...
move it.

At that instant a UPS truck pulls in front of the Grand Cherokee --
blocking her in.

TRAFFIC COP (CONT'D) (to the TRUCK DRIVER)

How long you gonna be?

TRUCK DRIVER

Two minutes.

Frankie assesses the situation.

168

INT. POLICE VAN - DAY

168

Strode, Donner and crew are now just a couple of blocks away from the bank. Strode relaxes, loosens his tie. He leans up against the window as the others chat away. Strode stares at the card in his hand. Keith Weston. He stares at the name.

DET. STRODE

Stony?

169

EXT. POLICE VAN - DAY

169

The van turns the corner and Strode's eye is caught by an empty parking space on an otherwise packed block.

STRODE'S P.O.V.

Looking down, he sees the empty space is dotted with mangled tapes and broken CDs.

170

INT. POLICE VAN - DAY

170

DET. STRODE

Stop!!! Turn around! They're hitting the bank NOW!
Right NOW!

The others look at him like he's crazy.

DONNER

We were just --

DET. STRODE

I'm serious! NOW!!

With no time to explain, he jumps over the seat, pushing the driver aside, and speeds down, in reverse, back to the bank.

171

INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - DAY

171

Stony pours another drawer into her bag.

STONY (to Tisean)

We got a minute and a quarter now...

CLEO (to Tisean)

Get another drawer...

STONY (sharper)

Let's start movin' out, Cleo!...

CLEO

Get the goddamn drawer, girl.

Tisean pauses. Looks at the open drawer full of cash -- it beckons her -- sitting there for the taking. Stony backs out -- gestures for her to follow. Suddenly Strode and crew bust in. The girls look to each other.

CLEO (CONT'D)

HOW fuck fuck'd he KNOW?

TISEAN

Oh my God...

Strode trains his gun on Cleo. The other cops cover the other girls.

DET. STRODE

Stony. Back down. I know why you're doin' this...

Suddenly, the security guards come rushing in behind the girls, preventing Strode and crew from firing. Seeing the window of opportunity, the girls duck and run for it. The security guards empty their cylinders in rapid succession. BANG! Two bullets cut through Tisean; her body jolts at the glass door.

CLOSE - HER GUN

falling to the floor. Her blood splashing into Cleo's face. Another BULLET SHATTERS the GLASS in the doorway. Shards of jagged glass rain down on them as this DELUGE OF BULLETS continues.

Stony reaches for Tisean. Tisean is in shock, her eyes wide, aghast. Blood APPEARS at her lips.

CLEO

opens up with her 9mm -- three shots tear through the security guard but he still returns fire. Cleo takes a bullet to the shoulder; it only grazes her. She discharges more shots.

A uniformed guard dives for his gun and opens fire, hitting Cleo in the thigh, blood spurting like the plume of a firework. She retreats.

172

EXT. STREET - DAY

172

Frankie hears the BARRAGE OF GUNFIRE sounding off like cannons.

FRANKIE'S P.O.V. - STONY

dragging Tisean across the sidewalk, leaving a wake of blood and money. Cleo limps across the sidewalk after them; jumps into the Cherokee.

BACK TO SCENE

Frankie reverses and smashes into the Traffic Cop's compact car, literally knocking it out of the way. Her exit is blocked, so she puts the Jeep into reverse and veers onto the sidewalk, still in reverse, racing past the entrance of the bank.

CLOSE - A UNIFORMED GUARD

comes running out of the bank, fires, empties his entire clip into the Grand Cherokee.

CLEO

leaning out the window, blasts the guard. The guard seeks cover behind a mailbox but Cleo shoots right through the mailbox, uplifting it from the sidewalk.

173

INT. GRAND CHEROKEE - DAY

173

as BULLETS cut through the GLASS and EXPLODE like firecrackers. Stony's and Frankie's faces are badly cut. The Cherokee rams through a hotdog stand, dragging it for several feet, turning the:

CORNER

ramming through a rack of fur coats being pushed by two fashion-workers; then onto the:

STREET

The Cherokee speeds up to 90 mph. Directly into the lane of an oncoming ambulance. Head-on collision about to happen when:

At the last instant the ambulance driver veers away to avoid colliding.

174

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY (TEN MINUTES LATER)

174

The Grand Cherokee pulls up to the Impala. Stony helps Tisean into the Impala. Frankie drives the Cherokee away, while Cleo loads the loot into the trunk of the Impala.

175

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

175

Frankie's on the curb, having ditched the Grand Cherokee. The Impala pulls up; Stony's at the wheel. They race off.

176

INT. IMPALA - MOVING - DAY

176

STONY

We got to take you to the hospital, Tisean.

TISEAN (straining, in pain)

No... no hospital...

Frankie begins to cry when she realizes how critically Tisean is wounded.

CLEO

Use my shirt and try to stop her bleeding.

STONY

How bad are you hit?

CLEO

Just flesh wounds.

BACK SEAT OF IMPALA

Frankie stretches Tisean across the seat and then rips her shirt to arrest Tisean's profuse bleeding.

177 EXT. IMPALA (MOVING) - DAY

177

Stony EXITS the freeway, headed back to Oakland. They see two B&Ws pass by westbound. Stony puts the car in reverse, goes in another direction, northbound.

178 EXT. LAGUNA STREET - SAN FRANCISCO MARINA - DAY

178

Stony drives through traffic. Up ahead an SFPD cruiser turns around. As it passes them, there's a deadly moment of eye-contact. A beat. And then, in the rearview mirror, Stony sees their lights go on.

STONY

Damn!!

The car gives chase. Stony races the Impala north. The SFPD cruiser gets blocked by traffic.

179 EXT. DIRT ROAD TO WOODEN PIER - FORT POINT - DAY

179

Stony maneuvers the dirt road as it winds its way to a wooden pier jutting out into the ocean. Stony drives onto the pier. Stops the car and climbs into the back seat with Tisean.

Frankie is holding Tisean in her arms. Stony takes her trembling hand. She looks at the same place she and Keith parked the limo... thinks to herself the best moment and the worst moment of her life happened on this deserted pier.

TISEAN

I knew I wasn't gonna make it... just had a bad feeling...

They work furiously to arrest her bleeding. Tisean smiles at Stony and then her face becomes still in death.

Stony starts to cry.

DISSOLVE TO:

180 EXT. PIER AT SUNSET (TWO HOURS LATER)

180

Stony is still holding Tisean. Frankie takes Tisean's body, places it adrift in the sea. The tide swallows her -- takes her body away, beyond the horizon, like some mythical carrier. Cleo looks on from the car, wounded... bleeding.

DISSOLVE TO:

PIER

Stony ties another tourniquet onto Cleo's leg. The other sun hovers over the ocean, its brilliant light casting the entire beach in the shade of orange pastels. The sand, the sky, the water... the sails of bobbing boats... everything is burnt orange.

WE SEE

the silhouette of a police helicopter cast against the ebullient setting sun. The helicopter is coming off the ocean, silently... the whir of its blades swallowed by the ocean. Sights locked onto the Impala.

Stony starts the engine, backs off the pier, heads back into the city.

181 EXT. STREET - SUN SETTING - AERIAL VIEW 181

of the three women in the Impala racing through San Francisco.

At first there is only the one helicopter, soon joined by another belonging to a local news station.

182 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY (5 P.M.) 182

The helicopters follow the Impala like locusts in the sky. Two B&Ws and several unmarked cars trail the Impala on the ground as does a news van. The cops keep their distance, hoping to avoid a gunfight, hoping to obviate the need for a dangerous high-speed car chase. A SWAT truck joins the chase from the Embarcadero on-ramp.

The Impala cruises on at just 55 mph.

183 INT. SAN FRANCISCO UPSCALE BAR - EVENING 183

Bunch of yuppies at happy hour. They form a tight knot at the bar glimpsing the live mini-cam action on two.

MAN

Jake, pour me a double... this is gonna be great.

BUSINESSMAN

Hey, that's that "All Girl Posse," they finally got those crazy niggers.

While the men view this spectacle with the same detachment that one might view a sporting event, the women at the bar seem to sympathize with three women hunted down by an army of police.

184 INT. CLEO'S APARTMENT - EVENING 184

Ursula is tuned into the TV, watching intently.

ON THE TV MONITOR

ANCHOR (TV, V.O.) (OVER THE WHIR OF THE HELICOPTER BLADES) The suspects are coming off the exit at Fillmore. Police reports indicate that the women are from Oakland. You can see at the top of your screen there is a blockade of Fillmore, that the suspects are not aware of.

185

EXT. KOREAN LIQUOR STORE - EVENING

185

Stony sees the blockade -- five cruisers, lights aglare. She veers into the parking lot of a liquor store to traverse onto another street.

186

INT. IMPALA - MOVING - EVENING

186

CLEO

... pull up to the drive-in window...

Stony's puzzled.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Fuck 'em, I'm thirsty...

Stony drives up to the window. The Korean MERCHANT looks at Cleo, then looks at the live coverage on the TV near his counter. Looks at Cleo, then back at the TV.

CLEO (CONT'D)

... two forties, real cold. (to Stony) You want something?

FRANKIE

She's the designated driver... remember...

STONY

Make it three...

TV MONITOR

ANCHOR (TV, V.O.)

... the "All Girl Posse," I can't believe this, as you can see, they've pulled up to the drive-up window of a liquor store just off of Fillmore and Pacific. They seem to be ordering quart-sized bottles of beer... the police are in a holding pattern, I'm certain they are just as puzzled as we are.

ANCHOR (TV, V.O., CONT'D)

The police are backing off to ensure that no unnecessary confrontation with these heavily-armed women occurs...

187

INT. SAN FRANCISCO BAR - EVENING

187

The men slap high-fives.

BARTENDER

...these gals are great, I can't friggin' believe this...

188

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - EVENING

188

The Merchant nervously delivers the three forties... blood from Cleo's hand passes to his.

CLEO

We ain't got any money... the loot's in the trunk.

MERCHANT (heavy accent; Korean)

It's okay, this Bud's for you...

TV MONITOR

ANCHOR (TV, V.O.)

The police continue to move away, keeping their distance, trying to avoid a direct confrontation that might endanger innocent passersby.

189

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

189

Stony races west, around other cars that have stopped to witness this spectacle.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

Here we go again, they're moving fast now, westbound toward the beach, they're way ahead of the ground cruisers because of the traffic but they can't evade the helicopters. The black-and-whites are closing in on them. I just checked with the SFPD liaison, he's reporting that this Nineteen Sixty-Four Chevy Impala has approximately forty minutes of fuel left...

190

EXT. EMBARCADERO - NIGHT

190

Stony drives across four lanes and down the embankment, through a wire fence and into a warehouse district.

The police cars are all stacked up on the other side of the medial barrier, unable to continue their pursuit.

191

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

191

The Impala races through the alley at 80 mph. Overhead a lone police chopper follows in the sky.

192

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - AERIAL VIEW - NIGHT

192

The 'copter searches for the car below, beaming spotlights through the dark night like large mechanical arms.

193

INT. NEWS HELICOPTER - OPEN SKIES - NIGHT

193

REPORTER

... I think... I think they've lost her... you can see at the lower right corner of your screen, Ken, and our home viewers, that the police 'copter is hovering; they've temporarily lost the suspects. Bob, pull back to a wide shot so that our audience can see the hovering police 'copter.

A police helicopter hovers, moving slowly, lost. Confused as a hound dog which has lost the scent of the fox. Trying to find the Impala.

194

INT. BASIC BLACK BAR - NIGHT

194

The bar is now SRO. Nate watches with a bunch of other men.

NATE

Go, babydoll...

195

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

195

Eight, perhaps ten black-and-whites race PAST the CAMERA in either direction. The police move over every square foot of this warehouse district. The SWAT team truck races in behind.

196

INT. NEWS HELICOPTER - OPEN SKIES - NIGHT

196

REPORTER

For the last two minutes there's been no sighting of the three women suspected of holding up the Pan-Pacific Bank at Sansome and Market earlier today. We do see the SWAT team members leaving their truck and entering the warehouse district on foot, armed to the nines. This looks like Fifth near Bluxome. Whoa!!! Yes, they've spotted them again, look at the upper left corner of your screen.

The police helicopters converge on the point where the Impala is again located. The pursuit continues.

197

INT. BASIC BLACK BAR - NIGHT

197

The faces of the hopeful crowd sadden.

198

INT. IMPALA - MOVING - NIGHT

198

STONY (racing)

We gotta split up, three separate directions.

Stony races into the Third Street tunnel. The helicopters hover over both ends of the tunnel, waiting for the black-and-whites to catch up.

199

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

199

The Impala stops. Cleo slides into the driver's seat. Frankie and Stony grab a money bag apiece.

CLEO (racks her 9)

... I'll keep them off y'all.

A beat. The women look at each other. This is their final moment together. Stony squeezes Cleo, sees her Armani gown, grabs the gown, stuffs it into the shoulder bag. They smile at Cleo.

Cleo guns the Impala and races out of the tunnel. When the car comes out of the tunnel all of the helicopters follow her. Stony and Frankie break through the utility lock box, climb into cable housing and make their way to a back alley.

STONY & FRANKIE

running in separate directions, through the dark shadowy alleys of downtown San Francisco. The crazed CACOPHONY suggests the Tet Offensive, not the pursuit of three female bank robbers.

200

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

200

Cleo races the Impala down the street with a chopper hovering just above her head. The intersection is immediately blocked by a black-and-white. She whips the car in reverse and heads the other way, turning on only two wheels -- that intersection is blocked. In the b.g. the Greyhound Bus Station sign flashes... close but so far away. Both the police and news helicopters circle in the sky like predatory vultures, sensing the kill is near. OVERHEARD from one of the police cars as it zooms past us:

COP (V.O.)

... affirmative... I repeat, only ONE suspect remaining in the car...

201

INT. PAN-PACIFIC BANK - NIGHT

201

Keith wanders through the decimated bank, looking shell-shocked.

202

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

202

Frankie scampers through the alley like a frightened cockroach fleeing the kitchen light. The helicopter's beams search every nook and crevice of this dark alley.

She cowers under a large trash dumpster as the hot, bright beam passes over her and then back again.

The choppers are so close she can see the faces of the pilots. Frankie abandons the moneybag and runs into an intersecting alley.

203

EXT. ANOTHER ALLEY - NIGHT

203

Stony is out of breath. Her legs are cramping painfully but she refuses to stop. A chopper moves over her as she hides in a dark shadow...

204

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

204

Cleo is in the middle of a street, all four outlets are closed off by the SWAT team. The sharpshooters take their position behind their vehicles. In a moment some 20 assault rifles train on Cleo's head.

She sits in the Impala, steam billows from the overheated radiator. She grips Tiscan's gun in one hand and hers in the other. The HELICOPTERS WHIR in the sky above her.

CLOSE - SCREECHING TIRES

of the Impala.

CLOSE - CLEO

racine the Impala into the SWAT team, attempting to penetrate their barricade. She starts emptying the clips from both guns into the SWAT team. The police return a barrage of fire cutting through the car. Cleo takes a bullet through the throat.

The Impala flips over. Silence. The SIZZLING of the RADIATOR. Leaking of anti-freeze. Cleo moves slowly, comes to her feet, crawling from the Impala, staggering like a wounded deer. She tries to fire her gun again and the cops use her for target practice. The HAILSTORM OF BULLETS pierces her body like lightning bolts. The bullets that hit her from the posterior push her forward but the bullets hitting her from the anterior push her back like a spineless puppet on a string.

The collective rage of the cops is vented in her death.

205

INT. SAN FRANCISCO BAR - NIGHT

205

Silent. Speechless. These people have just witnessed an execution.

206

INT. NEWS HELICOPTER - NIGHT

206

The Reporter is terrorized by what he just witnessed. He just looks INTO the CAMERA.

REPORTER

"We've just... had... a... horrible moment here...

He can't even continue the report.

207

INT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION - NIGHT

207

Stony waits nervously in the ticket line. A COP ENTERS the station, hurriedly surveys the occupants. The Cop walks in her direction. At first she thinks she is only imagining this but the Cop comes directly to her.

She buries her bloodstained hands in the pockets of her jean jacket. His steely eyes search her out. He walks past her to another young black woman in the line. Removing her from the line Gestapo-like -- begins to search through her luggage. During the bag-check Stony has moved forward in the ticket line to the point where she stands parallel to the Cop and the woman.

COP

I'm sorry, ma'am, but you have a likeness to a criminal suspect we are seeking.

COP (CONT'D)

(Cop turns to Stony) You're about to lose something.

Stony follows the Cop's gesture to her shoulder bag. The Armani is hanging from the bag. Stony could easily tuck the gown in but she boldly opens the bag and gingerly folds the dress in, hoping her calm demeanor will dispel any suspicion the Cop may harbor. We SEE that the bag is loaded with stacks of fresh money. If the Cop leaned forward slightly, he too, would see this. She pushes the dress back into the backpack -- smiles calmly, flirtatiously, at the Cop. A crisp one-hundred-dollar bill floats like a feather from her bag when she tosses it over her shoulder. No one notices the bill fall leaf-like to the floor. The bill is too far away for her to cloak with her foot.

COP (CONT'D)

Where you headed?

STONY

Seattle.

The Cop's PARTNER calls out to him.

PARTNER

Mike, they got one over on Folsom Street, near the Moscone.

The two Cops rush out of the station.

TICKET AGENT

Next, step up, please. Where you headed, Seattle, did you say?

STONY gazes at the myriad of cities: San Diego, L.A., Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Barbara, Santa Fe.

STONY

Santa Fe...

TICKET AGENT

Bus leaves for Phoenix in ten minutes but there's a four-hour layover in Phoenix... and again in Albuquerque.

She numbly nods.

208

EXT. STREET - GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT

208

The bus pulls into the dark of night. Many of the streets are blocked because of the police action. The helicopters are still circling. The bus is stopped by a cop directing traffic. Another cop walks by the bus looking at the passengers.

A BLOCK AWAY

Frankie moves away from a trash dumpster with her hands held high in the air. Det. Strode walks out of his car towards her. He grabs her in a headlock -- a dozen guns trained on her. But Frankie is slick, and the tables are turned in a sudden, final outburst. Frankie grabs Det. Strode's gun and places it by his temple. The cops are about to shoot, and Strode puts a hand up.

DET. STRODE

WAIT!!!

FRANKIE (grimacing, bleeding)

So... you got a gun at yo' head. What's the procedure, huh?

Strode is sweating, doesn't want the cops to fire with him this close.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

What's the fuckin' procedure when you got a GUN AT YO' HEAD, MOTHUHFUCKER?!

Strode is silently praying.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Hasn't the procedure been DRUMMED --

Before she can finish, Strode manages to knock the gun out of her hand and flip her. As her body lands, with a THUD, a few feet from him, the cops open fire. Strode ducks, holding his head.

DET. STRODE

No!!! NO!!!

Frankie's body is riddled with bullets. As the dust clears, we can SEE Strode, shaken. The cop opens the street and the bus passes by.

CLOSE - DETECTIVE STRODE

covered with Frankie's blood, a look of disappointment and total defeat as he stares at the bus.

209 INT. BUS - NIGHT

209

All the passengers lean to the left side of the bus to get a better view of the police action.

As the bus passes, Stony looks away. She can't bear to see Frankie's body.

210 EXT. BUS (MOVING) - NIGHT

210

The bus moves unimpeded through the city to the freeway to the 880 across the Bay Bridge to Oakland. The bus passes the Martin Luther King Elementary School playground. Stony peers out the bus window. Presses her face against the cold glass...

HER P.O.V.

We SEE girls playing. They could be her and the posse at seven, playing Double-Dutch on the playground.

The CHILDREN'S VOICES turn to a distant ECHO, forever lost in time. The bus turns to another corner of the playground.

BACK TO STONY

Tears in her eyes, face pressed against the window, eyes peeled to the playground as this dream withers from her imagination.

211 INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - NIGHT

211

In a crib, lined up with other babies, Jajuan stares through the bars, crying. No one is there to hold him.

212 EXT./INT. BUS - NIGHT

212

Now away from the city, trekking through the dark, lonely desert. Stony rests against the cold window and watches the cactus pass her by.

213

INT. HOTEL ROOM - FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA - NIGHT (LATER)

213

Stony is lying on her bed watching TV news. On the other bed is a big pile of fresh cash, maybe \$150,000. Hanging alone in the closet is the Armani gown.

ANCHOR (TV)

We have some rather disturbing footage from the capture of a female bank robbery suspect in San Francisco at approximately seven p.m. Pacific time. Because of the graphic nature of the footage we would caution viewer discretion...

Stony flicks the TV set off. The room turns to darkness.

214

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

214

Stony is at a pay phone. In the b.g. is a truck stop, painted desert and the haunting silhouettes of cactus plants. An 18-WHEELER WHISTLES by, that resonant, then murmurous HUM subsumed by the desert in the desert's consuming darkness, then all is silent again.

The PHONE is RINGING:

215

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

215

He answers... there is no response. He can hear the sultry desert WIND BLOWING through the phone. He can feel Stony's pained presence. They both listen to this silence for several beats...

KEITH

... Stony. I'm glad you're safe...

More silence, more DESERT WIND, distant CHIMES on the breeze. She ventures to speak but nothing can be said. Disconnect.

216

EXT. HOTEL SWIMMING POOL - DAY

216

Two white women tanning in skimpy bathing suits by the pool side. WIDEN ANGLE TO INCLUDE Stony lying in the sun with her street clothes on; jeans, flannel shirt, Calvin Klein underwear pulled up above the waist.

CLOSE - HER FACE

The sun reflecting in her sunglasses.

TIGHTER - HER EYES

behind the sunglasses...

A tear streams down her cheek from behind the sunglasses.

217

INT. HER ROOM - DAY

217

Stony stares at the piles of money. Her fingers trace the faces of dead Presidents. She grabs one thin packet of hundreds and tucks it into her jeans. Then, determined, even angry, she pushes all the rest of the money into a brown envelope. Thinks for a moment, and then writes "JAJUAN" and the address for Child Protective Services.

218

INT. HOTEL - DAY

218

Stony passes by a maid's cart. Two Mexican maids come out of the rooms they are cleaning. They notice ten \$100 bills mashed into a cup of hotel pens on the cleaning cart.

They marvel over the money... watch Stony as she DISAPPEARS down the hallway... rejoice in some vibrant Spanish chatter as they count the money.

219

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

219

Stony walks through the lobby; EXITS to...

220

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

220

...finds a mailbox, looks at the padded parcel addressed to Jajuan Williams and throws it in. Heads out onto the wide open road... drives into the morning sun... free... the wind blowing in her hair.

FADE OUT.